

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH.  
Edited by G. Currie Martin, M.A., B.D., and T. H. Robinson, M.A., D.D.

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# THE BOOK OF AMOS

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## *EDITORS' PREFACE.*

**T**HE modern translations that exist of parts or of the whole of the Old Testament are, as a rule, too expensive and too scholarly for the ordinary reader. In the case of the New Testament excellent help has been afforded by many recent translators, notably by Dr. Moffatt. In a wide experience among working men and women we have found frequent requests for a simple version of the Old Testament in similar language to that employed in the modern versions of the New Testament. By the generous help of our colleagues in this enterprise we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship.

Literary elegance has been sacrificed to clearness of expression and simplicity of language, and we trust that in this way these messages of the prophets that once touched the people with such power, may again reach the hearts of our own generation, and lead them to such inward and outward reforms as may make actual the spiritual and material utopia of which the prophets dreamed.

If the response is sufficiently encouraging we shall proceed to other books of the Old Testament, but we feel that the prophets have the primary claim, both owing to the obscurity of the ordinary translation and to the nature of the message these writers have to give.

Suggestions and criticisms for future issues will be welcomed by the Editors.

G.C.M.  
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# THE BOOK OF AMOS

## IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH.

### INTRODUCTION.

**A**MOS lived and prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, that is, about 750 B.C. He refers in one place to an eclipse of the sun, which was probably that of June 14th, 763, so his activity must be placed before rather than after the middle of that century. He himself came from Judah, though the only place named as the scene of his utterances is the royal chapel at Bethel, where Jeroboam had his own special temple. But it is possible he spoke elsewhere in any place which provided him with a suitable audience.

#### *The conditions of the period :*

As far as external prosperity goes, Israel was probably better off in the days of Jeroboam II than at any other time in her history, except, perhaps, in the reign of Solomon. Her old enemies, the Syrians of Damascus, were now too weak to offer serious opposition to her, and Jeroboam, who seems to have been a strong, and in some ways a statesmanlike king, extended the territories of Israel more widely than any of his predecessors in the northern kingdom had done. Our knowledge of the history of the time is derived almost entirely from Amos, Hosea and Isaiah, but from them we can see something of the story of conquest and its results. The first of these was a great increase in commerce and wealth—even luxury. The ports of the Red Sea were now open, and brought the trade of the far East into the country. The Phœnician cities provided a gateway to the West, and from the North there would come caravans bearing the produce of central Asia. This affected the people of Samaria and other large cities especially, but the influence spread over the whole country. Luxuries which had never been known before poured into the land. Men were able to build solid stone houses instead of the old brick or clay dwellings, and to furnish them with costly wood instead of the poor native timber.

But with this there came a terrible change in the character and economic condition of the people. The peasant farmers who had been the backbone of the nation, sturdy and independent, brave in war and wise in peace, had been ruined by the troubles of the last century, and were exploited by shameless profiteers.

To get the necessities of life they mortgaged their tools, their clothing, their land and their persons. A class of capitalist moneylenders sprang up, who soon concentrated the wealth of the country into their own hands. Men lost their land and became serfs; they lost their freedom and became slaves. The corruption of the law courts helped the process, and it did not matter if a man were in the right or not; if he could bribe the judge, even with an insignificant offer, he could secure a decision which would give him what he wanted. The other person's land might pass into his possession, or the man himself become his slave. The result was the building up of large estates, cultivated by slave labour, and the consequent rotting of the nation.

Like Hosea and Isaiah after him, Amos seems to have never tired of denouncing the religion of Israel as he found it. It must be remembered that the revelation of God is a slow process, and that in his days it had never yet occurred to the ordinary man outside Israel, and not even to all Israel, that God wanted man to be morally good. Everybody believed in the existence of a large number of gods, and each tribe and people had its own. These gods were supposed to be like their worshippers in character, and what they wanted was the observance of rites, and the proper offering of sacrifices. The Israelites had a God whom they called Yahweh, and it was only as the result of the preaching of men like Amos that they learnt that Yahweh had any connection with righteousness. As a matter of fact, men believed—and this is true of almost all the religions in the world except Judaism and Christianity—that the gods (including Yahweh) demanded of men acts which would have been most strongly condemned in private life. There is no doubt that (as in some forms of Hinduism) sexual immorality was one of the sacraments. There is too much reason to believe that the Israelite honestly believed that Yahweh might, and at times did, require human sacrifice. The great message of Amos was that God was at least as good as man, and more, that he was supremely interested in goodness. No amount of formal religious observance could compensate for a man's wrongdoing. This was a new idea to most of the world, and, familiar though it seems to us who have been brought up in the Christian tradition, it yet marks one of the most profound revelations of divine truth that humanity has ever received.

### *The Book of Amos :*

The prophets spoke under the stress of a peculiar condition of mind and body, which we commonly call the ecstasy. Their utterances were short, and seem usually, if not always, to have been poetic in form. These short speeches were not always written down immediately, and some of the prophets do not seem to have used the pen at all. Their message, they felt, was for their own time. But these messages were seen to have a permanent value, and were often kept isolated and separate. Then they would be copied and collected into smaller or larger groups, where the name of the prophet was known. To these would be added other isolated pieces which were anonymous. In the process many of them might undergo alteration. The language might be changed, so as to produce prose instead of poetry. Sometimes this was done by the prophet himself, but in the case of the earlier books it was clearly the work of the compilers of the small collections, or of someone even earlier than them. Sometimes the writing would be torn or badly copied, with the result that the compiler had only a fragment of the original oracle. Nevertheless he often put it in. The compiler arranged his material as seemed good to him, usually without regard to historical order, and seldom with any explicit reference to the occasion on which any oracle was delivered. Sometimes—as in the early chapters of the Book of Amos—the compiler shews a very high degree of literary and dramatic appreciation. There is reason to believe that he occasionally adopted a kind of formula, and fitted the oracles of the prophet into it. Amos i. and ii. are not the only examples of this tendency. Very often in placing his matter together, he was guided by no surer principle than the occurrence of similar language and thought in two oracles which may have been uttered at very different times and under very different circumstances. In particular, compilers were fond of grouping together oracles about foreign nations.

In the Book of Amos, then, we have a collection of oracles of different dates and types, of which the great majority were probably uttered by Amos himself. The only indications we have as to the date and occasion of each are what we may gather from the oracle itself, and each must be treated separately, without reference to its neighbours. This necessarily makes the

reading of the prophets a little difficult, but it is always possible to get their real message, in spite of the apparent "scrappiness" of the material.

*The Text of the Book :*

In ancient times all writing was necessarily done by hand. Generation after generation would copy the completed books of the prophets. Needless to say, mistakes were often made, and it is sometimes difficult to tell what words the compiler wrote. The original language of the book of Amos was Hebrew. In this tongue it was copied and recopied in Palestine, and some time before the second century B.C. copies were taken to Egypt or to other places where there were settlements of Jews. Naturally, the copying process went on, and mistakes would be made, but it would not often happen that the same mistake would be made in the Egyptian copies as in the Palestinian ones. We have to follow the history of both if we wish to understand how we are to work at the task of finding out what the book was like in its original form. Somewhere about the year 600 A.D. the Jewish Rabbis who inherited the Palestinian tradition, decided on a single copy as being the orthodox text from their point of view. All others were gradually made away with, and it is from this that all our existing copies of the Hebrew Bible are descended. We have no Hebrew representatives of the Egyptian tradition, but in the second century B.C., Egyptian Jews translated their Bible, bit by bit, into Greek. This we still have, and we can use it to find out what the Egyptian text was like in the second century B.C. Of course there have been errors in the Greek text due to copying, but anyone who knows both languages can generally decide whether the mistake was made in Greek or Hebrew. It must be remembered that Amos spoke nearly twenty-seven centuries ago, and it would be very surprising if his words had come down to us without error. Nevertheless, by using the Greek text, representing the Egyptian tradition of at least two thousand years ago, and the Hebrew text representing the Palestinian tradition of about thirteen centuries ago, we can approach with some certainty to the actual words of the prophet. The present translation has been made from the traditional Hebrew text, the Greek being used to correct it where necessary or possible. In every case where the translator feels that there is an error in the Hebrew text, he has followed what seems to

him to have been the original form of the words, and noted the change at the foot of the page, giving there a rendering of words rejected. In these cases the traditional Hebrew text is indicated by the letters MT. Where the change is based on the ancient Greek translation, the fact is noted, and the letters LXX are used as a symbol for the words which the Greek translators had in the Hebrew copies they used. In some cases the original has had to be guessed, but in no case has the translator followed a guess of his own. Thus, a note like this:—\*So LXX; MT inserts "the Lord" means that the traditional Hebrew text has the word "Lord" at this point, whilst the text current amongst Greek speaking Jews in the second century B.C. had not. And a note:—\*MT "Zion" means that while there is good ground for believing that the word translated is the one used by the prophet, the traditional Hebrew text has the word "Zion."† In the pages that follow, actual translation from the Hebrew text is in ordinary type; small type is used for headings and notes.

### *The Translation :*

The present translation is an attempt to reproduce the prophet's message in the simplest and plainest terms. No more freedom has been used than would be held to be necessary in translating from a Greek or Latin book. But a large part of the beauty and literary value of the book has been deliberately sacrificed. The poetic form and language—often of great power—has been obscured, in order to secure familiar terms. In the traditional English translations the prophets are often difficult to understand; and are hardly easier in the very fine literary renderings of scholars like Professor McFadyen. Yet readers would do well to keep one or other of these translations beside them in studying the following version. But if this attempt, in spite of all its weakness, helps our generation to understand Amos, it will have succeeded, and will have prepared the way for better things in years to come.

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† In such a case the absence of any mention of LXX may be taken to mean agreement between the Egyptian and the Palestinian traditions.



# AMOS.

The following are oracles uttered by Amos, a herdsman from Tekoa. They came to him in visions during the reigns of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam ben Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

I. A short oracle which the compiler thought a suitable heading.

i. 2. He said :

Yahweh's voice will ring out from Zion and from Jerusalem like a lion's roar, so that the place where the flocks used to feed will be a scene of woe, and the peak of Carmel will be scorched with drought.

2. Syrian raids on eastern Palestine used to be carried out with unusual brutality.

i. 3-5. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Damascus has been guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. She has tortured Gilead, threshing men with sharp iron flails. So I will burn to the very ground the fine palaces built by Hazael and Benhadad. In the vale of Aven and Beth Eden I will wipe out the population, officials and all. I will break the gate-bars of Damascus, and the people of Syria will be deported to Kir.

These are the words of Yahweh.

3. The Philistines used to invade Judah and carry off people as slaves, selling them to the Edomites in the south.

i. 6-8. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Gaza is guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. They have deported whole populations and handed them over as slaves to Edom. So I will burn to the ground the wall and palaces of Gaza. And I will wipe out the people of Ashdod and Ashkelon, officials and all, and I will strike Ekron again and again, and the Philistines will be destroyed to the last man.

These are the words of Yahweh.\*

† 4. The Phœnicians have been guilty of a similar offence.

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\* So LXX; MT inserts "the Lord."

† This oracle is attributed by some modern students to a speaker considerably later than the time of Amos.



i. 9-10. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Tyre is guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. With entire disregard for the obligations of treaties and common humanity, they have handed over entire populations as slaves to Edom. So I will burn to the ground the walls and palatial buildings of Tyre.

5. An oracle possibly two hundred years later than the time of Amos,\* condemning Edom for her treatment of Israel. In this case it probably refers to the part played by the Edomites in the destruction of Jerusalem, in B.C. 586, when they sided with the Chaldeans, and gloated over the fall of Judah.

i. 11,12. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Edom is guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. Sword in hand, he has persecuted those of the same blood as himself. He has crushed down all human feeling, and has kept up an endless and undying fury of vindictiveness. So I will burn to the ground the walls and palatial buildings of Teman and Bozrah.

6. The Ammonites were a semi-Arab tribe living to the east of Palestine. They used to raid their more civilised neighbours, and treat them with the utmost cruelty, especially the Israelites east of Jordan.

i. 13-15. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Ammon is guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. In their land-grabbing passion they have ripped up the pregnant women of Gilead. So I will burn to the ground the walls and palatial buildings of Rabbah, with battle cry and sweeping storm, and their king and nobles will be deported.

These are the words of Yahweh.

7. In war with Edom, the Moabites had violated the royal tombs of the country, and had burnt the bones they found there.

ii. 1-3. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Moab is guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. They even burnt the very bones of the king of Edom to a white ash. So I will burn to the ground the palatial buildings of Kirioth. And amid roar and triumph-shouts and trumpet-calls of battle Moab shall die,

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\* It should be remarked that modern students of the Old Testament differ as to the date of this oracle. Some prefer to assign it to Amos himself.



and I will wipe out all those of rank and authority among them, killing them together with the rest of the people.

These are the words of Yahweh.

\* 8. Judah is condemned for her failure to fulfil the moral demands of Yahweh. The words might have been uttered at most periods in her history.

ii. 4,5. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Judah is guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. By her breach of Yahweh's laws she has deliberately rejected his instructions, and she has been led away by the false gods which her ancestors followed. So I will burn to the ground the palatial buildings of Jerusalem.

9. The corruption of justice in Israel.

ii. 6,7a. Yahweh has spoken to this effect :

Israel has been guilty of so many crimes that it is impossible for me to reverse the sentence I have passed. The price of a pair of shoes is enough to secure the enslavement of a poor man. They make the lower classes step aside for them, and when a man is helpless, they have used the opportunity to trample down his very head.†

10. Religion, as Amos saw it, did not require men to be righteous.

ii. 7b-12. Yahweh speaks :

Father and son both use the servant-girl as a harlot. Instead of representing me as holy, they make me appear morally foul. The very cloths§ which they spread beside all the altars are garments taken in pledge, and the sacramental wine which they drink in their God's house belongs to those who have pawned it with them.

All this in spite of the fact that when you appeared in the country I destroyed the Amorites for you. The latter were as tall as the highest cedars and sturdy as the strongest oaks, but I blasted them root and branch. What is more, I fetched you up from Egypt, and, after leading you for forty years in the desert I helped you to turn the Amorites out.

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\* This oracle is almost certainly later than the time of Amos. Its presence is probably due to someone who felt that the list of nations was incomplete without the mention of Judah.

† So LXX; MT adds "upon the dust of the earth."

§ So LXX; MT inserts "upon."

Further, I appointed some of your people to be prophets, and some of your young men to be Nazirites. \*But you forbade the prophets to prophesy, and you made the Nazirites break their vows by giving them wine. O you Israelites! Does all this mean nothing to you?

This is Yahweh's oracle.\*

I I. An oracle which may refer to an invasion which Amos expected, and describes the collapse of the morale of the army of Israel.

ii. 13-16. I will make you rock† from the very bottom like a cart loaded with sheaves, so that the speed of the fastest runner will be useless to him, and the strongest will not retain his strength, nor the bravest save himself, nor the archer stand his ground, nor §the stouthearted find courage among soldiers, but he shall fling away his weapons and take to flight.§

This is Yahweh's oracle.

I 2. There is a reason for everything. Things that one observes in the country always imply something more than what immediately appears. So the existence of suffering proves that Yahweh is at work, vindicating his moral laws: the prophet speaks because he has heard Yahweh's voice.

iii. 1-8. Listen to what Yahweh has said of you, you Israelites:||

Just because you are the only nation in the world with whom I have come into close relations, I will punish you for all your crimes. If two people walk together, does it not prove that they mean to go the same way? If a lion roars in the forest, does it not prove that he has prey? If a lion growls,¶ does it not prove that he has caught something? If a bird drops towards the ground,\*\* does it not prove that there is something to attract him? If a ground-trap is sprung, does it not prove that it has caught something? Can the alarm be blown in a city without people being frightened? If there is suffering in a city, does it not prove that Yahweh is at work?

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\* . . . . \* M'T has these words in a different order, which is hardly intelligible.

† In the present state of our knowledge, M'T seems meaningless. This rendering assumes a change of one letter.

§ . . . . § M'T is very uncertain, and almost certainly erroneous. The above is probably not far from the original form.

|| M'T adds "all the family whom I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying."

¶ M'T inserts "from his den."

\*\* So LXX; M'T adds "on a snare."

Yahweh, the Master, does nothing without telling his plans to the prophets, his slaves; and since Yahweh, the Master, has spoken, one can no more help prophesying than one can help shuddering at the lion's roar.

I 3. The moral chaos which Amos saw in city life.

iii. 9,10. A proclamation to be made in the finest quarters of the cities of Assyria\* and Egypt:

Come together to the hills round Samaria, and see the utter confusion and oppression in the city. People are absolutely ignorant of the meaning of honesty, and their hoarded wealth† is simply what they gained by crimes of violence.

§ This is Yahweh's oracle. §

I 4. Threat of a foreign enemy.

iii. 11. This is the reason why the Lord Yahweh has said:

|| Your land ¶ shall be surrounded by enemies, ¶ and your strength will be flung down, and your mansions looted.

I 5. The completeness of the coming destruction. The metaphor was probably suggested by the prophet's own experience.

iii. 12,13. Yahweh has spoken to this effect:

It sometimes happens when an animal has been carried off by a lion, all that the shepherd can rescue is a pair of knuckle bones or the tip of an ear. In just the same way, the corner of a single bed, or a piece\*\* of a rug, will be enough to hold all the people of Israel and Samaria who will escape. Listen to this; remember it, and repeat it in the country of Jacob.

This is the oracle of Yahweh, God of Hosts.

I 6. People were in the habit of taking refuge in temples, and claiming the protection of the god by taking hold of the horns of the altar. But no religious rite will henceforth be any protection for wrongdoers. The shrine and altar themselves will be affected, so that there will be no means of securing exemption from punishment.

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\* So LXX; MT has "Ashdod."

† MT adds "in their palaces."

§ . . . § Placed by MT after "honesty."

|| So LXX; MT has "the."

¶ . . . ¶ MT is uncertain, but this seems to be what Amos meant.

\*\* MT very uncertain, apparently mentioning Damascus. But this is probably the idea that Amos had in mind.

iii. 14, 15. When I punish Israel for breaking my law, I will pay special attention to the altar\* of Bethel. The horns of the altar will be cut off and thrown down to the ground. And I will strike down the winter houses and the summer residences. And those mansions with all their ivory and ebony† decorations will be so wrecked that not a trace of them will be left.

This is Yahweh's oracle.

I 7. At bottom it was the greed and luxury of the women which was responsible for the terrible social conditions of Israel.

iv. 1-3. Listen to this, you women of Samaria—you great Bashan cows! You grind down and oppress the poor lower classes. You are always nagging your husbands for money to buy drink. So Yahweh§ has taken this solemn oath by his own holy self:

The time is coming when men shall drive fish hooks and barbs into your soft flesh, and you will be dragged straight through the holes that have been broken in the city walls, and flung on to dung heaps.

This is Yahweh's oracle.

I 8. Amos exposes the false nature of the religious ideals of his time. This is probably one of the earlier oracles, uttered during the prophet's visit to Bethel.

iv. 4, 5. Come to the sanctuaries of Bethel and Gilgal—but all you will do when you get there will be to commit more and more iniquity. Bring your morning sacrifices—do! Take three days over offering your tithes—by all means! Burn your sweet sacrifices in praise—yes, and keep them pure of leaven! Call out the amount of your subscriptions—shout it out loud so that everybody can hear you! That is the kind of religion you Israelites really like!

This is the Lord Yahweh's oracle.

I 9. In this and the four following oracles Amos describes natural calamities which have fallen on Israel. They probably occurred in the same year, and if the first verse of the book is to be trusted, it was two or three years after the prophet's first appearance at Bethel. The earthquake of i. 1 seems already to have taken place. This oracle speaks of famine.

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\* M'T "altars."

† MT "many." This reading is suggested by comparison with Ezekiel xxvii. 15.

§ So LXX; M'T inserts "the Lord."

iv. 6. In all your cities I kept your teeth clean by giving you no food, and everywhere there was a shortage of bread. Yet you did not learn that you must come back to me.  
This is Yahweh's oracle.

20. Drought.

iv. 7,8. Three months before the harvest, when rain was most needed, I kept it back from you—it was I that did it. Sometimes I sent rain on one city and not on another. Sometimes rain fell in one district alone, and that in which it did not fall would dry up. So the people of two or three cities had to go to one to get water to drink, and there was not enough for them. Yet you did not learn that you must come back to me.  
This is Yahweh's oracle.

21. Blight on the crops.

iv. 9. I afflicted you with blight and mildew; I scorched up\* your gardens and vineyards, and more than once locusts devoured your figs and olives. Yet you did not learn that you must come back to me.  
This is Yahweh's oracle.

22. An epidemic.

iv. 10. I sent an epidemic on you†; I killed your young men in war§; I made your camp reek with the stench of rotten corpses. Yet you did not learn that you must come back to me.  
This is Yahweh's oracle.

23. The earthquake.

iv. 11. I brought on you an earthquake as frightful as that which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a charred stick, just snatched from the fire in time to be not quite burnt up. Yet you did not learn that you must come back to me.  
This is Yahweh's oracle.

24. Natural calamities prove the power of Yahweh.

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\* MT has "to multiply."

† MT inserts the words "in the way of Egypt."

§ MT inserts "with the captivity of your horses."

iv. 12,13. That is why I do this to you, Israel. \*Because I will certainly do it, prepare to meet your God, Israel. For, you see, Yahweh is the name of him who modelled the hills and shaped the wind, and told men his thoughts, and made dawn and dark, and walks on the high ground of the earth.\*

25. The death of purity and promise in Israel. This is quite possibly one of the last oracles uttered by Amos, and may have been suggested by the sight of an actual funeral.

v. 1,2. Listen, you Israelites, to this funeral hymn which I am about to sing over you :

Fallen is Israel, the virgin,  
Never to rise ;  
Earthbound, with none to uplift her,  
Prostrate she lies.

† 26. A disastrous war is in prospect. Probably Amos foresaw the coming of the Assyrians, though there is no record of their attacks on Israel in his time.

v. 3. The Lord Yahweh has spoken §to Israel§ to this effect:  
In every city nine-tenths of the men shall fall in battle. Out of every thousand only a hundred shall be left, and out of every hundred only ten.

27. Amos' contemporaries thought that religion consisted in pilgrimages to the famous shrines. This, he says, is not the case.

v. 4-6. Yahweh has spoken to Israel to this effect :

You must come to me if you want to save your lives. Do not come to the Bethel priests, and do not go to Gilgal or make long journeys to Beersheba. The people of Gilgal will all be carried off, and Bethel will come to utter ruin. You must come to Yahweh if you want to save your lives; otherwise, he will blaze out over northern Israel as a destructive and unquenchable fire.||

28. A fragment from an oracle which denounced the corruption of the law courts.

v. 7. . . . who turn the law into poison, and put an end to all the country's rights.

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\* Some modern students regard this passage as a compiler's insertion.

† It is possible that the words from "in every city" to the end of the verse form part of the funeral hymn of §25. In that case the introductory words in v. 3 will be a copyist's mistake.

§ MT places these words at the end of the verse.

|| MT adds "for Bethel."

29. Yahweh is supreme in nature and history.

v. 8,9. Yahweh is the name of the God who made the Pleiades and Orion, and arranged that day should follow night, and night follow day. It was he who called up the ocean and poured it over the earth. It was he who brought down\* ruin† and destruction on castles and on forts.§

30. Amos had apparently been attacked, not only by Amaziah, but also by others. A fragment for which no accurate dating is possible.

v. 10. . . . they hate and loathe any honest criticism. . . .

31. Capitalist moneylenders, after getting possession of land, retained the old owner as a working farmer, and charged him rent in the form of agricultural produce.

v. 11,12a. . . . you trample down the lower classes, and squeeze ||load after load|| of corn from them. Therefore you shall neither live in the marble palaces you have built, nor enjoy the wine of the lovely vineyards you have planted. For—as I well know—your crimes are untold, and your sins tremendous.

32. So corrupt are the judges, that it is wiser to suffer injustice than to appeal to them.

v. 12b,13. . . . you take bribes to persecute people who have done no harm, and wrong the poor in the courts. Therefore sensible people will keep still, for it is a disastrous time.

¶33. Another appeal for righteousness.

v. 14,15. You must aim at good and not evil if you would save your lives, and if Yahweh the God of Hosts is to be with you, as you say he is. You must hate evil and love goodness. You must see that real justice has its place in the law courts. If you do these things, then Yahweh the God of Hosts will be kind to such Israelites as remain.

34. The moral corruption of the people can only end in disaster.

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\* So LXX; MT has "smiled."

† So LXX; MT has "destruction."

§ So LXX; MT has "and destruction comes on forts."

|| . . . || So LXX; MT has "a load."

¶ Possibly to be joined to 32 to form one oracle.

v. 16,17. This is what Yahweh\* the God of Hosts has said :

In every square and street there shall be mourning and moaning. Farmers in the country will send for professional mourners to wail and howl, and when I pass through the heart of your land there will be sorrow in every vineyard instead of glee.

It is Yahweh who has said this.

35. People believed that when Israel was in real need, then Yahweh would interpose and bring a day of victory and a time of peace for his people. Amos had to tell people that Yahweh would indeed reveal himself, but it would be to avenge the cause of righteousness, not that of Israel. Her need was very real, but it was not the need people had in mind.

v. 18-20. You people who want the Millennium so badly, what good will the Millennium do you? I tell you it means darkness and not light. Suppose a man, trying to escape from a lion, finds a bear in front of him, and bolts into a hut and leans his hand on the wall and a snake bites him—that is what the Millennium will be like. It will be absolute pitch darkness, without a single ray of light.

36. In order, as they thought, to honour Yahweh, people had introduced features of foreign worship, and had even borrowed gods from Babylon and other nations. Amos hardly believed in any kind of ritual.

v. 21-27. I hate and loathe your festivals. Your special services do not affect me at all. When you burn offerings to me I do not enjoy your gifts, and I take no notice at all of your richest sacrifices. Do stop worrying me with your noisy hymns; I cannot bear the "music" of your harps. What I want is an unfailing, brimming river of justice and righteousness. All those forty years that you† were with me in the wilderness, you brought *me* no sacrifices. As it is, the canopy of your King-god and §Kewan, your Star-god, and the images you have made for yourselves§—all these things you will load on to your backs when I deport you away beyond Damascus.

These are the words of Yahweh, whom we call God of Hosts.

---

\* So LXX; MT inserts "the Lord."

† MT adds "O house of Israel."

§ . . . . § So LXX; MT has the words in this order: "Kiyyun (sic) your images and the star of your god whom you have made for yourselves."



37. The luxury prevalent in Israel in the latter days of Jeroboam II. brought national conceit and Jingoism with it. One of the lessons the prophet had to teach was that other nations were as good as they.

vi. 1-7. The complacent and thoughtless people of Israel\* and Samaria are too horrible for words. They think they are by far the most distinguished people in the world.† But if you go and look at Calneh, and then at the great city of Hamath, and the Philistine city of Gath, you will find that Israel is no more powerful and has no wider territories than these kingdoms had. And by putting off thinking about the day of calamity to a distant time, they bring appalling disaster the nearer. They lounge on ivory sofas, they sprawl on their beds, they send to the farms for lamb and veal to eat. They twitter to the music of the harp, they think their orchestra as good as David's. They drink the most expensive wine, and use the costliest toilet preparations. But for the wreck and ruin of their fellow-countrymen they have not the smallest sympathy. For all this they will be the first to be deported, and there will be no more of the shouting of these sprawlers.

38. Spoken when Israel was threatened by a terrible epidemic.

v. 8-10. Yahweh§ has sworn by himself||

I loathe the pride of Jacob, and I hate its mansions. So I will shut up the city and everything in it. ¶ And if there are still ten men left in a house, they shall all die.¶ And when a man's uncle helps the undertaker to lift up the corpse and carry it out of the house, he will ask the person left inside, "Is there anybody left with you?" And he will reply, "Not a single one." And (instead of saying "Yahweh bless you") he will say, "Sh!" because one must not mention the name of Yahweh.

39. A fragment, probably from the time of the exile.

vi. 11. Yahweh has ordered that all the houses, big and little, shall be smashed into fragments.

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\* MT has "Zion."

† MT adds "and the house of Israel shall come to them."

§ So LXX; MT adds "the Lord."

|| So LXX; MT adds "this is the oracle of Yahweh, God of Hosts."

¶ . . . ¶ This sentence seems misplaced; possibly it really belongs to §26, and should come at the end of v. 3.

40. Another attack on the corruption of the law courts.

vi. 12. Do you expect horses to gallop up a precipice? or \*would you drive an ox-plough over the sea? \* Quite as reasonable is your turning Justice into bitterness, so that one might as well poison one's self as go into court with a good case.

41. During the century which preceded the time of Amos, the Syrians of Damascus had taken possession of the greater part of the Israelite territory east of the Jordan. Jeroboam's troops had gradually recovered this, and when Amos spoke, they were gloating over the capture of two cities of this district, Lodebar in Gilead, and Karnaim in Bashan. The oracle seems to have lost its opening words.

vi. 13, 14. . . . you people who are gloating over the capture of Lodebar† and saying "How powerful we are to have taken Karnaim!" Oh! you Israelites!§ I will set a nation at you which will crush you from the Hamath frontier to the river of the Arabah.

42. The first of a series of visions. Some of these picture calamities which might have come, but did not, others calamities which would actually befall Israel. This is a vision of a locust plague.

vii. 1-3. The Lord Yahweh sent me the following vision:

I saw a ||flight of locusts||—this happened after the first crop of hay had been mowed and sent to the king as tribute, and the second crop was just beginning to come up—¶and it devoured¶ every single green thing in the whole country. And I said, "O Lord Yahweh! do forgive us! How can so small a nation as Jacob ever recover from this?" And Yahweh changed his mind and said, "Very well; it shall not happen."

43. Another vision. A universal fire.

vii. 4-6. Yahweh\*\* sent me the following vision:

He called ‡blazing fire,‡ and it devoured a mighty ocean, and it began to devour the land. And I said, "O Lord Yahweh! do stop! How can so small a nation as Jacob ever recover from this?" And the Lord Yahweh changed his mind about this and said, "Very well; this too shall not happen."

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\* . . . . \* MT has "shall one plough with oxen?"

† MT has "not a word."

§ So LXX; MT adds "this is the oracle of Yahweh, God of Hosts."

|| So LXX; MT has "one who modelled a locust."

¶ . . . . ¶ MT has "and it shall be that if it has devoured."

\*\* So LXX; MT adds "the Lord."

‡ . . . . ‡ MT has "to contend by fire."

44. Another vision. Israel is tested with a plumbline, and seen to be so far out of the straight that she must be pulled down altogether.

vii. 7-9. Yahweh\* sent me the following vision :

I saw the Lord standing by a wall with a plumbline in his hand. And Yahweh said to me, "What are you looking at, Amos?" "A plumbline," I said. And Yahweh said to me, "I am putting a plumbline against the heart of Israel my people, for I cannot go on overlooking things. And the shrines of Isaac and the chapels of Israel shall be desolate and deserted, and I will attack Jeroboam's dynasty with the sword."

45. The Israelite Government often had reason to fear revolution engineered by the prophets. It was such a revolution that had put Jehu, Jeroboam's ancestor, on the throne. Amaziah, as Priest of Bethel, was practically one of the Ministers of the Crown, and when he heard Amos talking as he did, jumped to the conclusion that the political party of the prophets was once more trying to overthrow the Government, and put a nominee of their own in power. He thought that Amos was an agent of this party, and that his aim was to rouse people against the King and his Ministers.

vii. 10-17. Amaziah, priest of Bethel, sent this report to Jeroboam, King of Israel :

"Amos is plotting against you among the people, and the world can no longer stand talk like this. He says Jeroboam will die a violent death, and that the whole population will be deported."

And Amaziah said to Amos :

"Be off, you seer, into Judah as fast as you can! That is the place for you to make a living by prophesying. On no account must you ever prophesy at Bethel again; this is the royal chapel and palace."

"A professional prophet," replied Amos, "I certainly am not. I keep sheep,† and grow sycamore figs, and Yahweh took me away from my work and told me to go and prophesy to his people Israel. Now listen to what Yahweh has to say to you. You tell me not to dribble prophecies over Israel and Isaac. So this is Yahweh's message to you :

Your wife will be driven to live on the streets. Your children, boys and girls alike, will be slaughtered. Your estate will be surveyed and divided up. You yourself will die on unholy ground, and Israel will be deported far from their own country."

---

\* So LXX; MT omits "Yahweh."

† So LXX; MT has a curious word which may mean "herdsman."

46. Another vision, that of a basket of summer fruit. There is a pun in the language of the prophet, the Hebrew word for "summer" being almost the same as the Hebrew word for "end."

viii. 1-3. Yahweh\* sent me the following vision :

I saw a basket of summer fruit. And he said to me, "What are you looking at, Amos?" I said, "A basket of summer fruit." "Ah," replied Yahweh, "a summary end is coming for my people Israel. I will never again overlook anything that they do, and the women's choir in the palace will just howl in their grief, for then† every place will be choked with corpses."§

47. People used to keep their Sabbath by doing no work, but they had their minds on their business with its cheating and oppression all the time, and never used their rest to think of God.

viii. 4-8. Listen to this, you who trample down and lord it over|| the poorer classes :

You sigh all day Sunday, "What a long time to wait till Monday morning! I wish it would come quickly, so that we might get back to our selling of corn and giving short measure, and running up prices and tilting the scales! And buying slaves cheap—a pair of shoes each will be enough! And making a profit out of the dust of chaff!" Yahweh has sworn by the pride of Jacob :

Never will I forget anything that they do! The only result of this will be another terrible earthquake which shall bring sorrow on everyone living in the land. The whole earth shall swell¶ and sink, just like the rising and falling Nile.\*\*

48. There was an eclipse of the sun on June 14th, 763 B. C., which was probably nearly total in Israel. This, of course, passed over. But Amos, knowing nothing of astronomy, saw in it a warning of the complete extinction of the sun.

viii. 9,10. The time is coming—this is the Lord Yahweh's oracle—when I will make the sun set at midday and darken the earth in broad daylight. And I will upset your holidays and

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\* So LXX; MT inserts "the Lord."

† MT inserts the words "this is Yahweh the Lord's oracle."

§ In MT two words follow, which, in the present state of our knowledge, are unintelligible.

So LXX; MT has "make them cease."

¶ So LXX; MT inserts "and shall be driven out."

\*\* So LXX; MT has "light."

hymns, and turn them into grief and wailing. Everybody will wear mourning, and it will be as bad as if every man had lost his only child, and the country will perish in bitter sorrow.

49. Spoken in time of famine, due to the failure of the annual rains.  
viii. 11, 12. Remember, the time is coming—this is \*Yahweh's oracle—when I will make everybody hungry. Food and drink will not satisfy that hunger and thirst; it will be the word† of Yahweh that they want. And people will wander to and fro, up and down and across the country, trying to find the word of Yahweh. But they will never find it.

50. Amos attributes the drought and famine to the false worship of the people.

viii. 13, 14. The time will come when girls in their beauty and men in their prime will faint with thirst. § And they shall fall and never rise again, § because they swear by the wicked religion of Samaria, using in their oath the words, “By the god of Dan,” “By the deity|| of Samaria.”

51. The last vision. Yahweh the destroyer.

ix. 1-4. I saw Yahweh standing by the altar. He said:

Strike the tops of the pillars so hard that the thresholds may be shaken as if by an earthquake, and crush the heads of all the people. If any of them are left, I will have them killed by the sword. Even if they run away and try to escape, their flight will not save them. If they were to dig right through the earth to the home of the dead, my hand would reach down and drag them back. If they were to climb into the sky I would bring them down. If they were to hide in caves on the top of Mount Carmel, I would hunt them out and drag them away. If they were to conceal themselves from my sight at the bottom of the sea, ¶ I would order the great Serpent to bite them. And if their enemies carry them off to slavery, ¶ I will order them to be slaughtered, and watch for every opportunity of doing them, not good, but harm.

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\* So LXX; MT inserts “the Lord.”

† So LXX; MT has “words.”

§ . . . § MT has these words at the end of the oracle.

|| So LXX; MT has “way.”

¶ MT prefixes “thence” in each place.

52. The majesty of Yahweh.

ix. 5, 6. It is the Lord Yahweh of Hosts, at whose touch the earth melts, and he brings sorrow on every one living on it, while it swells and sinks like the rising and falling Nile. It is he who builds his palace in the sky, and lays the foundations of his dome upon the earth. It is he who calls the ocean and pours it over the land—Yahweh is his name.

53. Yahweh makes no distinction between different races. The Israelites thought that he was their God alone, and did not care for other races. This impression has to be corrected.

ix. 7. Do you realise that I think of you Israelites just as I think of African negroes? It is true that I brought up Israel from Egypt, but it is equally true that I was responsible for the coming of the Philistines from Crete and of the Syrians from Kir.

\*This is Yahweh's oracle.\*

54. A threat of utter destruction.

ix. 8a. I tell you that the Lord Yahweh is on the watch for the sinful kingdom, and †will† wipe it out of existence.

§This is Yahweh's oracle.§

[The desire to tone down the horror and terror of the general destruction has led a compiler or a copyist to add the following small group of oracles, which there is no reason to attribute to Amos himself].

55. An addition made to the last oracle.

ix. 8b,9. Only I will not absolutely destroy all the nation of Jacob, but will have Israel sifted among the nations, as corn is sifted in a sieve, when not a single good grain falls through.

56. The person responsible for the addition of this group did not wish his readers to think that Yahweh would leave real sin unpunished.

ix. 10. A violent death will be the lot of the sinners among my people, though they think that no misfortune shall touch or fall upon them.

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\* . . . . \* MT places these words after "negroes."

† . . . . † MT has "I will."

§ . . . . § MT places these words at the end of v. 8.

57. After the punishment will come restoration. This is quite possibly the utterance of a Jew who survived the destruction of Jerusalem, a hundred and eighty years after the time of Amos, and hoped that the ruins around him might be restored.

ix. 11, 12. In the Millennium I will put up the fallen hut of David and build up its\* broken and ruined walls again, and its buildings shall be as before. And so they shall occupy what is left of Edom and all the other countries, because my name is on them.

This is the oracle of Yahweh of Hosts who does this.

58. A promise of material prosperity.

ix. 13, 14. The time is coming—this is Yahweh's oracle—when the seasons will be so fruitful that there will be no interval between ploughing and harvest, or between vintage and seedtime. And all the mountains and hills will melt with their torrents of sweet wine. And I will bring back those of my people Israel who have been deported, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. And they themselves shall enjoy the wine and the fruit of the vineyards and orchards which they plant. And I will see that they are too firmly rooted to be pulled up from the land which I have given them.

So says Yahweh your God.

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\* So LXX; MT has "their."





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Edited by G. Currie Martin, M.A., B.D., and T. H. Robinson, M.A., D.D.

NUMBER TWO.

# THE BOOK OF GENESIS

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## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE modern translations that exist of parts or of the whole of the Old Testament are, as a rule, too expensive and too scholarly for the ordinary reader. In the case of the New Testament excellent help has been afforded by many recent translators, notably by Dr. Moffatt. In a wide experience among working men and women we have found frequent requests for a simple version of the Old Testament in similar language to that employed in the modern versions of the New Testament. By the generous help of our colleagues in this enterprise we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship.

Literary elegance has been sacrificed to clearness of expression and simplicity of language. In the present book the wonderful stories of Genesis, with their abiding charm and permanent lessons will, we trust, find a new and wider audience as they are presented, so far as our knowledge goes, in the form in which they first reached their circle of readers.

We can now definitely promise a continuance of this series, and further issues will follow shortly. We are grateful for the reception given to "The Book of Amos," and have tried to benefit by many helpful criticisms received, for which we are thankful.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed by us.

G.C.M.  
T.H.R.

### *Note to Second Edition.*

The Editors beg to thank their many kindly critics and reviewers for a number of useful comments, many of which they have been glad to use in this second impression.

G.C.M.  
T.H.R.

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# THE BOOK OF GENESIS

IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH.

## INTRODUCTION.

WHEN a modern historian seeks to describe the events of the past, he reads and studies all the ancient records he can find, and then weighs, combines and interprets their story in language which is entirely his own, quoting his authorities and sources of information in footnotes. Not so the ancient writer, especially in the East. He was content to place earlier narratives side by side, or even to interweave their sentences and words, so producing the effect of a mottled cord in which close examination can detect several different coloured strands. He might occasionally find it necessary to insert words to explain the connection between passages, and if the same phrase or similar phrases occurred in both, repetition would naturally be avoided. Examples may be seen not only in Arab historians but in the Old Testament itself, as in the case of Chronicles, where records derived from the Books of Samuel and Kings have been combined with other material.

The Book of Genesis seems to have been spun in the main from three such strands. The first is a collection of stories of the origin of the world and of the Hebrew people which appear to have been current in Southern Palestine. Whilst the material may have been centuries older, handed down from mouth to mouth, and perhaps existing in written form as separate booklets, the compilation probably took place in the middle period of the Hebrew Monarchies. With this was combined, before or early in the Exile, another collection of similar narratives current in Northern Israel, and put together about the same time as the southern group, or a little later. This may have begun with the story of the creation, though if so, those who combined the two groups of narratives selected nothing earlier than the history of Abraham from the northern collection. The two groups are often very closely interwoven; nevertheless, in Genesis they can be disentangled with comparative certainty, and the following pages may serve as an illustration of the

completeness with which the compilers preserved the stories they intertwined.

During or soon after the Exile (say roughly 500 B.C.), the Jewish priests retold the story from their own point of view, laying special stress on matters of ritual, genealogies and exact figures. This narrative was clearly continuous, though it may have received additions from time to time. It was eventually—probably after the time of Ezra, say roughly about 400 B.C.—combined with the existing double narrative, and the whole forms our present Book of Genesis. This ecclesiastical work can almost always be recognised, and has been preserved almost entire.

In the following translation the three strands have been disentangled, by methods and with results that can be checked by reference to any modern technical book on the subject. The reader who is sufficiently interested can compare the three with one another, with a view to distinguishing their particular characteristics. These appear especially in cases where the same story is told by more than one and the separate narratives have been interwoven in the traditional text. Such, for example, are the story of the Flood: Southern (p. 14) and Priestly (p. 82); and of Joseph's being carried down to Egypt: Southern (p. 41) and Northern (p. 69). To enlarge on them at this point might be wearisome and would certainly be superfluous.

No doubt each of the three strands is composed of earlier threads of different origins. But for a grasp of the conditions and an understanding of the narrative, it is not at present necessary to carry the disentanglement further than has here been done. It may be added that one narrative, that of ch. xiv., seems to have come from none of the three longer ones, and to have been inserted in its present position—quite a suitable one—in the final compilation of the book. This chapter is therefore placed by itself at the end.

For principles of translation, the use and implications of the Divine name Yahweh, the fact of growth in the Israelite faith, the reader is referred to the Introduction to the present translator's rendering of the Book of Amos, which has already appeared in this series.

Attention may be called to one or two special points. From what has already been said it will be clear that from time to

time it is necessary to insert a few words in order to make a connection clear or to secure the continuity of a narrative. In the following translation such insertions are invariably placed in parenthesis, and the comparative rarity of this device is significant for the accuracy of the analysis. Further, the references in the section-headings are to the *whole* of the passage from which a narrative has been taken. Thus composite passages have the same or overlapping references in more than one of the three divisions of the book.<sup>1</sup> In the first and second divisions the section-titles are due to the translator ; in the third division they are taken from the text itself.

Before the invention of printing, all books had to be copied by hand, and, in spite of the greatest care, mistakes would be made in the process. All our ancient Hebrew copies of Genesis can be traced back to a form of text current in Palestine. Another was in use in Egypt, especially amongst the Jews settled in Alexandria. This was translated into Greek in the third century B.C., and whilst no Egyptian Hebrew copies have survived, we have this Greek text. In many places we have reason to believe that this (called the Septuagint and indicated as LXX) is more accurate than our Hebrew copies (called the Massoretic text, and indicated as MT). In such cases it is the Egyptian text which has been translated, and the fact has been stated in a footnote. Sometimes we have reason to believe that both are mistaken, and are compelled to guess—often with a high degree of probability—at the writer's original language. Such cases also are pointed out in footnotes, though where the LXX and MT agree, the former is not mentioned.

An index of passages will be found at the end of the translation.

Finally the translator ventures to express the hope that his work will help not a few to a more complete understanding of the Bible, to a clearer apprehension of God's adaptation of His truth to different stages in the growth of His people's mind, and to a fuller appreciation of that developing process in the revelation of God which found its fulfilment in the coming of Jesus into our world.

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<sup>1</sup> An exception has been made in the case of the third division, where the passages are sometimes widely scattered. In such cases the chapter and verse are indicated where the text has much matter from other sources in between two consecutive sentences of the present translation.





# GENESIS

## *THE STORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THINGS, AS TOLD IN SOUTHERN ISRAEL.*

### I. HOW YAHWEH MADE MAN.<sup>1</sup>

ii. 4-24. Once upon a time, Yahweh made the earth and the sky. But there were no plants on the earth, and no grass had begun to grow, because Yahweh had sent no rain down on the earth, and there was no man to look after the ground. But floods of water used to rise and soak all the surface of the ground, and one day Yahweh modelled a man out of earth, and when he blew into his nose a living breath, the man came to life. Then Yahweh planted a garden to the east in Eden, where he put the man whom he had modelled. Next he made all handsome and wholesome trees grow out of the ground, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There was a river flowing out of Eden to water the garden, after which it divided into four. One of these four is called Pishon ; it is the one which flows all round the land of Havilah where the gold is. The gold of that land is good, and there are also bdellium and onyx. The second river is called the Gihon ; it flows all round Abyssinia. The third river is called the Hiddekel ; it is the one which flows to the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates. Then Yahweh took the man whom he had modelled and put him in the garden of Eden, to take care of it and to look after it, and this was what he told him, "You may eat of every tree in the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ; be sure you do not eat of that, for the moment you do so you will DIE."

Then Yahweh thought, "It is not a good thing for the man to be alone ; I will make him a partner to match him." So he modelled out of earth all the wild animals and all the birds, and brought them to the man to see what cry he would utter at the

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 79ff.

sight of them, that whatever cry the man should utter on seeing each animal might be its name. Thus the man cried names for all the cattle and birds and wild animals, but, as for himself, he could not find a partner to match him. Then Yahweh sent him into a trance, and when he had gone to sleep took one of his ribs, closing up the flesh after it. When he had built up the rib he had taken out of the man into a woman, he brought her to the man, who said, "At last! This is one of my bones, part of my flesh! To her I will cry Wo-man because she was taken from man." That is why men always leave their fathers and mothers to keep to their wives, so that they are really one.

## 2. HOW MAN LOST PARADISE.

ii. 25-iii. 24. At first both the man and his wife went naked, without being ashamed. But one day the snake, who was cleverer than any of the other wild animals which Yahweh had made, said to the woman, "I suppose God has told you not to eat from any tree in the garden?" The woman answered, "No; we can eat the fruit of any tree in the garden except the tree in the middle of the garden. About it God has told us, 'You must not eat it nor even touch it, or you will die.'"

But the snake said to the woman, "Oh, no! You will not *die*; the fact is God knows that the moment you eat it your eyes will be open and you will know good from evil, exactly as God does." So when the woman realised that the tree was wholesome, beautiful, and desirable for its gift of wisdom, she took some of the fruit and ate it, and gave some too to her husband, who ate it with her. Then their eyes were opened, and they understood what it meant to be naked, so they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves aprons. When they heard Yahweh walking about in the garden in the cool of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves in the trees of the garden, so that he should not see them.

Then Yahweh called out to the man, "Where are you?"

"I heard you in the garden and hid for fear, because I was naked."

"Who told you you were naked? Have you been eating of the tree I told you not to eat?"

“ It was the woman you put with me who gave me some of the tree, so I ate it.”

Then Yahweh turned to the woman, and asked, “ What is this you have been doing ? ”

The woman said, “ I ate it because the snake misled me.”

Then Yahweh said to the snake, “ Because you have done this you are cursed more than any cattle or any wild animal. You shall walk on your stomach and eat earth as long as you live. I will make you and the woman and your children and her children hate one another ; men shall bruise your head and you will bruise their heels.” Then he turned to the woman, “ I will bring on you many toils and groans ; when your children are born it shall mean terrible pain to you ; you shall long for your husband, who shall be your master.” Then he turned to the man, “ Because you listened to your wife and ate the tree I told you not to eat, there is a curse on the ground for your sake. Your food will cost you trouble as long as you live. The ground will only grow weeds, and you will have to eat wild plants. Every meal will have to be won by the sweat of your face, till you go back to the ground you were taken from. You are only earth, and must go back to the earth.”

Adam gave his wife the name of Eve,<sup>1</sup> because she was the mother of all that lived. Then Yahweh made coats of skin for the man and his wife, and dressed them in them.

Yahweh thought, “ Why, the man has become exactly like one of us, as far as knowing good from evil is concerned. Suppose he goes so far as to take some of the tree of life, and wins immortality by eating it ? ” So he sent him away from the Garden of Eden, to look after the ground from which he had been taken, driving him out of the garden, and putting in front of it the Gryphons<sup>2</sup> with a whirling flame-sword, to guard the path to the tree of life.

### 3. HOW CRIME BEGAN.

iv. 1-24. Some time after Adam married his wife Eve, she had a son named Cain. She gave him this name, because she thought she had “ gained ” him from Yahweh.<sup>3</sup> Then again she

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* “ living.”

<sup>2</sup> Beings with animal bodies, birds' wings and human heads.

<sup>3</sup> So (apparently) LXX ; MT omits “ from.”

For notes on LXX and MT see p. 7.

had his brother Abel. Now Abel was a shepherd, Cain a farmer, so one day when Cain brought Yahweh some of his crops as a present, Abel brought the first of his flock and some of their milk as a present. But while Yahweh stopped to look at Abel and his present, he took no notice of Cain and his present ; so Cain was very angry and began to frown. Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Why are you angry ? Why are you frowning ? If you do well, . . .<sup>1</sup> but if you do not do well, then sin lies crouching outside your door."<sup>2</sup>

One day Cain said to his brother Abel . . .,<sup>3</sup> and when they were in the country, he attacked him and killed him. When Yahweh asked Cain where his brother Abel was, he said, "I do not know. Is it my business to look after my brother ? " Yahweh said, "What have you done ? Hark ! I can hear your brother's blood screaming from the ground. A curse on you ! driving you from the ground which has had to open its mouth to swallow the blood of your brother, which you have given it. Never again shall the ground give you its strength when you work at it ; you shall wander homeless throughout the world." Then Cain answered, "My punishment is too great to bear. Now that you have driven me from the ground out of your sight, I must wander homeless through the world ; anyone who meets me will kill me." So Yahweh, saying, "Very well ; sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on anyone who kills Cain," put a mark on him, so that no one who met him should hurt him. Then Cain went away from Yahweh's sight, and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

After Cain married, his wife had a son named Enoch. Then he built a city, to which he gave his son's name, Enoch. Enoch was the father of Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methuselah, and Methuselah was the father of Lamech. Lamech married two wives, one named Ada, and one named Zillah. Ada had a son named Jabal, who was the first of all the tent-dwelling shepherds. He had a brother named Jubal, who was the first of all the musicians.

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<sup>1</sup> MT adds "to lift up," but it is probable that some words have been lost.

<sup>2</sup> MT adds some words taken from iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Cain's actual words have been lost in course of the written tradition.

Zillah, too, had a son named Tubal Cain,<sup>1</sup> who was the first of all workers in<sup>2</sup> bronze and iron, and he had a sister whose name was Naamah.

One day Lamech said to his wives,  
Ada and Zillah,  
Hear my voice !  
Wives of Lamech,  
Give ear to my words !  
I slay a man for bruising me,  
A boy for a blow !  
Sevenfold is the vengeance for Cain,  
Seventy-seven for Lamech !

#### 4. THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM.

iv. 25, 26, v. 29. Once more Adam and his wife came together, and she had a son whom she called Seth, because she thought God had “set” her another child instead of Abel whom Cain had killed. Seth, too, had a son whom he called Enosh, in whose time men began to worship Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> . . . (Lamech had a son) whom he called Noah,<sup>3</sup> “because,” he said, “he shall give us rest<sup>4</sup> from our work and from the hard labour on the ground which Yahweh’s curse has placed upon us.”

#### 5. HOW GIANTS CAME INTO THE WORLD.

vi. 1-4. After a time men grew very numerous on the ground, and had daughters born to them. The gods saw how beautiful the human women were, and they married those whom they liked best. Then Yahweh said, “My spirit shall not always live<sup>5</sup> in man, because he is made of flesh, so he shall not live longer than a hundred and twenty years.” So in those days, and long afterwards, there were giants who were the children of the gods who married human wives. They were the heroes and famous men of old.

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<sup>1</sup> MT “a smith, every worker in.”

<sup>2</sup> It seems that a section has been omitted here.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning “rest.”

<sup>4</sup> So LXX ; MT “comfort.”

<sup>5</sup> So LXX ; MT “judge.”

## 6. HOW YAHWEH SENT THE FLOOD.<sup>1</sup>

vii. 5-8, vii. 1-viii. 22. At length when Yahweh realised how great was the wickedness of men in the world, and that all the time his thought and mind were utterly bad, he was sorry he had ever made man, and greatly troubled by it. So he thought, "I will wipe out the men I created from the surface of the earth;<sup>2</sup> it is a pity that I made them." But he was pleased with Noah, and said to him, "Go into an ark with all your family, for as far as I can see you are the only righteous man living. Take with you seven each—including male and female—of every clean animal, and a pair—male and female—of every unclean one. Seven each, too, of all the clean birds, to keep their kind alive all over the world. For in seven days' time I am going to send rain down on the earth for forty days and nights, to wipe everything I have made off the face of the earth." So Noah did exactly as Yahweh had told him, and (went) into the ark to escape the flood. Seven days later the flood began all over the world, and it rained for forty days and nights. But Yahweh shut Noah safely in, and when the water rose it lifted the ark up, so that it floated high above the ground. Meanwhile everything that breathed and lived on the land died; only Noah and the animals with him in the ark were left.

At last the rain stopped falling from the sky, and the water went steadily back from the earth. After forty days Noah opened the window which he had made in the ark, and sent out a dove, to see whether the water had gone down from the surface of the ground. But the dove could not find a perch to rest on, so it came back into the ark to him, because there was still water over all the earth, and he put out his hand and drew it into the ark. Then he sent out a raven,<sup>3</sup> which went to and fro till the water dried up off the earth. Noah waited seven days more, and then sent out the dove again. It came back in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak, so then Noah knew that the water was going down. Another seven days he waited, and then sent the dove out again, and this time it did not come

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 82ff.

<sup>2</sup> MT adds "man and beast and creeping things and the birds of the sky."

<sup>3</sup> MT places the sending of raven before the first sending of dove.

back at all. So Noah took the covering off the ark to look out, and found that the surface of the ground was dry.

Noah built an altar to Yahweh, for which he took some of all the clean animals and birds. When he sacrificed them, Yahweh found the smell so soothing that he said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, since the form of their minds is wrong from their youth, nor will I ever again destroy all life as I have just done. As long as the earth lasts, seedtime and harvest, frost and heat, summer and winter, day and night—these shall never cease."

## 7. WHY CANAAN WAS CURSED.

ix. 18-27. Shem, Ham—the father of Canaan—, and Japheth were the three sons of Noah who came out of the Ark, from whom all parts of the world were peopled. Now Noah was the first farmer to plant a vine. One day he got drunk on the wine, and lay uncovered in his tent. When Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father lying naked, he told his brothers outside the tent, but Shem and Japheth took a blanket and put it on their shoulders, and walking backwards, covered up their father's naked body, with their faces turned away so that they could not see him. But when Noah woke up and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said :

“A curse upon Canaan !

The meanest of slaves

Shall he be to his brothers.

May Yahweh bless Shem's tents<sup>1</sup>

And may Canaan be Shem's slave.

May God expand Japheth,<sup>2</sup>

That he dwell in the tents of Shem,

And may Canaan be his slave.”

## 8. THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH.<sup>3</sup>

x. 8-30. Cush was the father of Nimrod, who was the first absolute monarch in the world. He was also a mighty hunter in the sight of Yahweh, hence the proverb “As mighty a hunter in the sight of Yahweh as Nimrod.” His kingdom began with

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<sup>1</sup> MT has “Blessed is Yahweh the God of Shem.” The above rendering assumes a change in one letter and the transposition of another.

<sup>2</sup> “Japheth” is said to mean “expansion.”

<sup>3</sup> Compare pp. 84ff.



Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar, but he went out of that country into the land of Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Kelah, and Resen, a big city between Nineveh and Kelah. Egypt was the father of the Ludites, the Anamites, the Lehabites, the Naphtuhites, the Patrusites, the Kasluhites and the Cretans, from whom the Philistines sprang. Canaan was the father of Sidon—his eldest son,—Heth, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites and the Hamathites. Afterwards the tribes of the Canaanites were scattered till their limits were from Sidon, towards Gerar, to Gaza, towards Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Bela.<sup>1</sup>

Shem, too, Japheth's eldest brother, had sons, for he was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber. Eber himself had two sons. One of these was called Peleg,<sup>2</sup> because in his time the world was divided, and the other was called Joktan. He was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Ubal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophar, Havilah and Jobab—all these were sons of Joktan, and their home was from Mesha towards Sepharah, to the Eastern Mountains.

## 10. WHY MEN SPEAK DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.

xi. 1-9. To begin with, the whole world had only one language and form of speech. But as they travelled from the east, they came to a plain in the land of Shinar, and when they had lived there for a time, they said to one another, "Come and let us make bricks and burn them hard," so they used bricks instead of stone and asphalt instead of mortar. Next they said, "Let us build ourselves a city with a tower whose top shall reach the sky, so that we may become famous, or else we may be scattered over all the earth." Then Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which men were building, and said, "They are all one nation, and have only one language. This is only the beginning; soon there will be no stopping them from anything they make up their minds to do. Come, let us go down and make their language sound like babbling, so that they cannot understand one another." Thus Yahweh scattered them all over the world, and they had to stop building the city.

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<sup>1</sup> MT "Lasha," but see xiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "division."



So they called it Babel, because Yahweh made all the languages in the world sound like babbling, and scattered people all over the earth.

## 11. HOW YAHWEH CALLED ABRAM.<sup>1</sup>

xi. 28-xii. 9. . . .<sup>2</sup> Haran died before his father 'Terah, in the land where he had been born. Abram and Nahor both married, Abram's wife was named Sarai, and Nahor's wife Milkah, daughter of Haran, the father of Milkah and Jiskah ; Sarai had no child. Then Yahweh said to Abram, "You must leave your home, your relatives and your family, and go to a country which I will show you, that I may make you the ancestor of a great nation, giving you prosperity and fame, and making you a blessing. If men bless you, I will bless them : if they curse you, I will curse them, and all the nations of the world shall regard you as a type of the prosperous man." Obeying Yahweh's instructions, Abram, accompanied by Lot, travelled steadily through the country till he came to the sanctuary of Shechem at the oak of Morah. There Yahweh showed himself to him, promising to give that land to his descendants, though the Canaanites then lived there, and there Abram built an altar to Yahweh, who appeared to him. Moving on to the hills east of Bethel, he encamped with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, where he worshipped Yahweh at an altar which he built. Thence he went by stages to the Negeb.

## 12. HOW ABRAM WENT TO EGYPT AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

xii. 10-20. Whilst Abram was there, a terrible famine took place, so he went down to Egypt to stay for a time. Just before he entered that country he said to his wife Sarai, "You are such a beautiful woman that when the Egyptians see you and find out that you are my wife, they will kill me to keep you for themselves. Pretend to be my sister, and then, not only will my life be spared for your sake, but I shall prosper because of you." So, indeed, it happened. When Abram reached Egypt, the Egyptians saw what a beautiful woman she was. The king's

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<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> The beginning of this narrative has not been preserved.

officers saw her too, and praised her so highly to Pharaoh that she was taken into his harem, while Abram received for her rich presents of sheep, cattle, he-asses, slaves of both sexes, she-asses and camels.

But Pharaoh and his family suffered terrible diseases because of Abram's wife, till at last the king sent for him and said, "What does this mean? Why did you not tell me she was your wife? Why did you pretend she was your sister and let me marry her? There is your wife; take her away with you." So saying, Pharaoh gave Abram an escort and sent him away with his wife and all his property.

### 13. HOW ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATED.<sup>1</sup>

xiii. 1-18. Abram was now very rich in cattle, silver and gold, and when he left Egypt for the Negeb with his wife and property, Lot was with him. From the Negeb he travelled by stages as far as Bethel, to his old camping-ground between Bethel and Ai, where he once more worshipped Yahweh at the altar he had built there before. One day, in consequence of the number of sheep, cattle and tents which Lot also possessed, there was trouble between Abram's shepherds and Lot's. The country was then in the hands of the Canaanites and Perizzites, so Abram said to Lot, "We are of the same family; neither we nor our shepherds must quarrel. We must therefore part, and go opposite ways; take your choice of the whole country." This was before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and as Lot looked over the Jordan plain, he saw that it was a well watered country. Indeed, it might have been the very garden of Yahweh, or the approach to Zoan,<sup>2</sup> in Egypt. So, choosing the Jordan plain, Lot travelled eastwards by stages, camping near Sodom, whose inhabitants were wicked sinners in the judgment of Yahweh.

After Lot and Abram had thus parted, Yahweh told Abram to look round him in every direction. "I will give you and your descendants," he said, "all the land that you can see as a permanent possession. Your descendants shall be so many that no one shall be able to count them, unless he can count all the grains of soil in the world. Do not stay here; travel over the

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<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> M'T Zoar.

land ; it is my gift to you." So Abram made a permanent camp by the oak<sup>1</sup> of Mamre, where he built an altar to Yahweh.

#### 14. HOW YAHWEH RATIFIED A COVENANT WITH ABRAM.<sup>2</sup>

xv. 1-21. When Yahweh told Abram that his reward would be very great, the latter said, "But, my Lord Yahweh, what reward can be given to a childless man like me? My heir will be my household slave." But when Yahweh told him that it was not so, but that a child of his own would be his heir, Abram trusted Yahweh, and so put himself in the right with Yahweh. Then Yahweh said to Abram, "I am Yahweh, who brought you out of the Chaldean Ur, in order to give you possession of this land." Abram begged for some proof, and Yahweh told him to get a calf and a she-goat and a ram, each of three years old, and a dove and pigeon. This he did, and cut each of the animals—but not the birds—into two, putting the pieces properly opposite one another. Then he scared away the vultures from the carcasses till nearly sunset, when a terrible gloom fell upon him. And when the sun had actually set, and it was quite dark, he saw a smoking furnace, lurid with torchlike flame, passing between the pieces. Then and there Yahweh made an agreement with Abram, solemnly promising to give his descendants all that land, from the Egyptian River to the Great River, *i.e.* the Euphrates. That included all the land then inhabited by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.

#### 15. HOW HAGAR SAW YAHWEH.

xvi. 1-14. Sarai, Abram's wife, had an Egyptian slave named Hagar, and one day she said to Abram, "Yahweh has prevented me from having any children; suppose you marry my slave, perhaps I shall get children by her." So Abram obeyed Sarai and married Hagar, but when Hagar found that she was about to become a mother, she began to look down on her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, "It is your fault, and I hope you will suffer for it! I put my slave in your arms, and now she finds that she is about to become a mother, she

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT plural.

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 57, 86ff.

looks down on me. May Yahweh avenge me on you!" Then, when Abram said, "Your slave belongs to you absolutely; do what you like with her," Sarai treated her so cruelly that she ran away from her. But the angel of Yahweh met her at a well in the desert<sup>1</sup> and, speaking to her by name, asked where she was coming from and where she was going. She said, "I am running away from Sarai my mistress." The angel said to her, "Your expected child will be a son, to whom you are to give the name Ishmael<sup>2</sup>, because Yahweh has heard your distress. He will be a wild ass of a man, at war with everybody else, and living in defiance of all his kindred." So, as Yahweh spoke to her, she gave him a new name—El-roi<sup>3</sup>—because she had seen God<sup>4</sup> and survived.<sup>5</sup> The well, too, which is between Kadesh and Bered, received the name of Beer Lahai Roi.

## 16. HOW YAHWEH PROMISED ABRAHAM A SON AND TOLD HIM ABOUT SODOM.

xviii. 1-33. This is how Yahweh shewed himself to Abraham<sup>6</sup> at the oak<sup>7</sup> of Mamre. Abraham was sitting one day at the door of his tent in the heat of the day, when suddenly he saw three men near him. At once he ran from his tent door towards them and bowed low before them, saying, "Sir, I beg of you to do me the favour of remaining awhile with your humble servant. Let them bring you water to wash your feet, and rest under the tree while I fetch a crust to refresh you before you go on with your journey. Then you will not have come to my door in vain." When they agreed, Abraham hurried into the tent and told Sarah to take a bushel of the best flour and knead it into cakes. Then he ran to the herd and chose an ox, tender and fat, which he gave to a servant, who quickly prepared it. Then, bringing curds and milk with the ox which he had prepared, he waited on them under the tree while they ate. They asked him where his wife Sarah was, and he told them she

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT adds: "by the well on the way to Shur."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "God hears."

<sup>4</sup> MT "hither."

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, "God sees."

<sup>5</sup> MT omits.

<sup>6</sup> For the change of name see p. 87. It is possible that only one form of the name was used in this and the Northern narrative, the alterations being made when all three were combined.

<sup>7</sup> So LXX; MT plural.

was in the tent. So one of them said, "I will come here again in a year's time, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." Now Sarah was behind the door of the tent listening, and both she and her husband were now too old to expect children. So, with this fact in her mind, she laughed silently. But Yahweh asked Abraham, "Why does Sarah laugh, doubting whether she can have a child? Is anything too wonderful for Yahweh? As I said, in a year's time I will come again, and Sarah shall have a son." She was so frightened that she denied she had laughed, but he insisted that she had.

When the men addressed themselves to their journey, looking towards Sodom, Abraham went with them to put them on their way. Then Yahweh thought, "Shall I hide what I am about to do from Abraham? He is to be the ancestor of a great and powerful nation, a type for all the world of a prosperous man. I know that he will so teach his son and his family that after he is gone they will still do my will, and I shall be able to do all that I have promised him." So he said to Abraham, "I have heard frightful rumours of the appalling wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. I am therefore on my way down to Sodom, to find out whether the rumours which have reached me are true or not." But when the men turned towards Sodom, Yahweh stayed with Abraham,<sup>1</sup> and the latter, humbly approaching him, said, "Surely you would not destroy good and bad alike? Suppose there are fifty good men in the city, would you not spare it for their sakes? Surely you cannot do such a thing as this? Surely you must make some distinction between the good and the bad? Surely the judge of the whole world will himself act justly?"

"If I find fifty good men there," Yahweh answered, "I will spare the city for their sake."

"Humble and insignificant as I am," Abraham answered, "I have had the audacity to speak to Yahweh. Suppose there are five short of the fifty? Would you destroy the city for the sake of five?"

"If I find forty-five good men there I will not destroy the city."

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<sup>1</sup> Altered by the Jewish Scribes into "Abraham. . . . Yahweh," because they thought the original form blasphemous.

“ Suppose there are only forty ? ”

“ If there are forty there I will not destroy it.”

“ O Lord, do not be angry if I ask, Suppose there are only thirty ? ”

“ If I find thirty there, I will not destroy it.”

“ I am bold enough to ask again, Suppose there are only twenty ? ”

“ If I find there twenty, for their sake I will not destroy it.”

“ Do not be angry ; this is the last time I shall speak. Suppose there are only ten ? ”

“ For the sake of ten I will spare the city.” So Yahweh ended his conversation with Abraham, who went back to his tent.

## 17. HOW SODOM WAS DESTROYED AND LOT ESCAPED.

xix. 1-28. When the two angels reached Sodom that evening Lot was sitting at the city gate, and on seeing them he rose and greeted them with a low bow. Rising, he begged them to take shelter for the night in his house, and to wash their feet, that in the morning they might go on their way. On their saying that they preferred to stay in the open street, he pressed them till they came to his house, where he had prepared for them a meal and had baked unleavened cakes for them to eat. Before they lay down for the night, the house was surrounded by a crowd containing every man in the city, whatever his age was, shouting to Lot, “ Where are the visitors who came to you to-night ? Bring them out to us that we may abuse them.” Lot himself went out to them, shutting the door behind him, and implored them to desist from their foul purpose. Indeed, he went so far as to offer to place at their absolute disposal his two virgin daughters, if only they would not molest these men who had accepted the shelter of his roof. But all they said was, “ Be off ! ” “ This fellow came alone, a foreigner, and now he is trying to set himself up as our judge ! ” “ We will treat you worse than them ! ” and with the words they mobbed him and tried to get to the door to break it in. At last the visitors interfered, and dragged Lot into the house, shutting the door, whilst they blinded the men, great and small, who were round the door, so that they failed to find it. Then, turning to Lot,

they said, "If you have here in this city any relative by marriage, any son or daughter or another whom you care for, get them out at once. We are about to destroy the whole place. Yahweh has received such reports of them that he has sent us to wipe them out." So Lot went to his prospective sons-in-law, and bade them instantly leave the city, for Yahweh was about to destroy it. But they thought he was joking.

The dawn was already breaking when the visitors began to hurry Lot away. "Bestir yourself," they said, "take your wife and the two daughters whom you have here at hand or you will share the punishment of the city." Finding that he still hesitated, through Yahweh's compassion on him, they gripped them all four by the hand, drove them out and left them outside the city. When they had them there, they said to him, "Fly for your life to the hills. Do not stop to look behind you, or you are doomed." Lot replied: "Oh, sir, I would beg of you the favour of adding to the kindness which you have already shown in saving my life. I cannot fly to the hills or fatal disaster will overtake me. This city—it is only a small one—offers a convenient refuge. Let me fly to it to save my life." He answered, "Your request is granted; this city of which you have spoken shall not be destroyed. But make good your escape to it with all speed, for I can do nothing until you reach it." That is why its name is Zoar.<sup>1</sup> Then, just at sunrise, as Lot entered Zoar, Yahweh poured down from<sup>2</sup> the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah floods of sulphurous flame, destroying those cities and, indeed, the whole plain, with all its inhabitants and all vegetation. But Lot's wife had looked behind and had become a pillar of salt.

Next morning, when Abraham went out to the spot where he had stood with Yahweh, on looking towards Sodom and Gomorrah and the plain, he saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.

## 18. OF LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

xix. 30-38. Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar, so he went up with his two daughters to the hills, and lived in a cave there. One day the elder daughter reminded her sister that their

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, "little."

<sup>2</sup> MT adds "from Yahweh."



father was an old man, and that there were no men there to marry them as happened to everyone else. So she suggested that they should make their father drunk and take advantage of his condition to get children by him. So that night they made their father drunk with wine, and the elder lay with him without his being aware of her coming or going. Next day she said to her sister, "I have lain with my father; to-night let us make him drunk with wine again, that you in turn may lie with him, and we may get children of our father." So that night too they made him drunk with wine, and the younger took the step of lying with her father, without his knowing when she came or went. Thus Lot's two daughters became mothers by their father, the elder having a son to whom she gave the name of Moab—the ancestor of the modern people of Moab—and the younger having a son to whom she gave the name of Ben Ammi—the ancestor of the modern people of Ammon.

### 19. HOW ISAAC WAS BORN.

xxi. 1-7. In fulfilment of the promise which Yahweh had made to Sarah, she bore Abraham a son in his old age. She said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah is suckling children, or that I have borne him a son in his old age? <sup>1</sup>Everyone who hears of it will laugh at me!"<sup>1</sup>

### 20. HOW ABRAHAM MADE A TREATY WITH ABIMELECH.<sup>2</sup>

xxi. 25-33. . . .<sup>3</sup> Every time Abraham began to discuss with Abimelech the question of the wells<sup>4</sup> which the latter's men had appropriated, he would deny all knowledge of the matter, and say, "You never said a word about it to me before, nor have I heard of it from any other source till this moment." So one day Abraham set seven lambs apart by themselves, and when Abimelech asked him the meaning of his action, he replied, "Be good enough to accept these seven lambs from me, in recognition of the fact that it was I who dug these

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<sup>1</sup> MT has these words before the preceding sentence.

<sup>2</sup> Compare p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> The beginning of this narrative has not been preserved.

<sup>4</sup> So LXX; MT has the singular.



wells." When they had thus made an agreement, Abraham planted a tamarisk tree and worshipped Yahweh, the eternal God, there. He afterwards stayed on for a long time in Philistia.

## 21. OF ABRAHAM'S RELATIVES IN HARAN.

xxii. 20-24. News came to Abraham that his brother Nahor and Milcah his wife had had the following children : The eldest was Huz, and with him was born Buz. Then followed Kemuel, the ancestor of the Syrians, Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel, the father of Rebecca. These eight were the children of Nahor and Milcah, Abraham's brother. He also had a secondary wife named Reumah, whose children were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

## 22. HOW REBECCA WAS BROUGHT TO ISAAC.

xxiv. 1-67. Yahweh had now bestowed prosperity on Abraham in all his undertakings, till at last, feeling that old age was coming over him, he sent for the eldest of his slaves, whom he had made supervisor of all his property, and gave him a solemn charge. "Swear to me," he said, "by Yahweh, God of Heaven, with your hand under my thigh, that you will not marry Isaac my son to a woman of the Canaanites in whose midst I live, but that you will go to my own family to find a wife for him."

"But," objected the slave, "suppose she will not follow me to this country ? In that case am I to take your son back to the country you have left ?"

"Not on any account ! It was Yahweh, God of the sky, who brought me from my father's home where I was born, and promised me with an oath that he would give me this land. Be assured then that he will prepare the way for you in his own fashion, and that you will succeed in getting my son a wife from there. But should she by any chance refuse to follow you, then you will be absolved from this oath of yours. But under no circumstances may you take my son back." On this understanding the slave gave Abraham his master the required oath, with his hand under his thigh..

Shortly afterwards the slave began his journey with ten of his master's camels and all kinds of valuable presents from his master, and eventually reached Aram Naharaim, where Nahor lived. In the evening, as the women came out to draw water, he made his camels kneel by the well outside the city, and prayed, "O Yahweh, my master's God, grant that thy favour may now be shewn to my master Abraham. Here I sit by the well, while the women of the city come out to draw water. Grant me this proof of thy kindness to my master. If I speak to a girl and ask her to let down her pitcher for me to drink, and she offer not only to give me drink, but also to draw water for the camels, may it be she whom thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac." The words were not well out of his mouth when there came from the city Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher on her shoulder, a very beautiful girl, still unmarried. She went down to the well to fill her pitcher, and as she came up the slave ran to her and begged for a drop of water to drink from her pitcher. "Certainly, sir," she said, and at once let down the pitcher on her hand. When he had drunk all he needed, she offered to draw water for all the camels to drink. So she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well and drew water for all the camels to drink, while the man watched her in silence, wondering whether Yahweh had given his journey a prosperous end or not. At last the camels finished drinking, and then the man took a golden ring of half-an-ounce weight and 'put it in her nose' and put two golden bracelets of ten ounces on her wrists, as he asked her, "Whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" She answered that there was plenty of litter and fodder, and room for them to spend the night. On hearing this the man bowed in prayer before Yahweh, saying, "Blessings on Yahweh, the God of Abraham my master! He has not ceased to be loving and faithful to my master. I had only to begin my journey for Yahweh to lead me to the home of my master's family."

Rebecca had a brother named Laban, and when the girl ran in and told her mother's family what had happened, and he

saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists and heard her telling them what the man had said to her, <sup>1</sup>he rushed out to the well<sup>1</sup> and found the man standing by the camels near it. "Come in!" he cried, "with Yahweh's blessing. Do not wait outside; I have cleared the house and made room for the camels." So he brought<sup>2</sup> the man into the house and untied the camels, giving them litter and fodder, whilst he had water brought to wash the feet of the man and those who were with him. Food was then set before him, but he refused to eat until he had told his story. On receiving permission to speak, he thus began:

"I am the slave of Abraham. Yahweh has bestowed great prosperity on my master, raising him to a high position, and giving him flocks and herds, silver and gold, slaves of both sexes, camels and asses. Now Sarah, my master's wife, has had one son, born in <sup>3</sup>his father's<sup>3</sup> old age, and he is leaving to him all his property. He made me swear that I would not find him a wife from the Canaanites in whose land he is living, but would come to the old home where his family still lived to find a wife for his son. When I asked him what I should do in case the woman refused to follow me, he said, 'Yahweh, in whose presence I live, will prepare the way for you in his own fashion, and the result of your journey will be that you will succeed in bringing a wife for my son from my own family and my father's home. All that is required of you to secure freedom from my curse is to go to my family; if they refuse to grant the request, then you are absolved from the oath.' So when I came to the well to-day, I prayed, 'O Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, if thou wilt indeed make my journey a success, then here I stand by the well; if, when I ask a woman who comes out to draw water, to give me a little to drink, she not only gives me a draught, but also offers to draw for my camels, then may she be the woman whom thou hast appointed for my master's son.' Before the words were well out of my mouth I saw Rebecca coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder and going down to draw water. I asked her for a drink, and she not only lowered her pitcher quickly but also offered to get water for the camels. So when I and they had drunk, I asked her whose daughter she

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<sup>1</sup>.....<sup>1</sup> MT has these words after "happened."

<sup>2</sup> MT has "came."

<sup>3</sup>.....<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT has "her."

was, and she told me that she was the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor. So I fell down and worshipped Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, because he had led me straight to the niece of my master for his son. Tell me then whether you intend to treat me kindly and honourably or not, that I may know which way to go.”

When they heard this, Laban and Bethuel answered, “This is Yahweh’s doing ; we can say nothing whatever to it. Here is Rebecca ; take her with you, to be the wife of your master’s son, as Yahweh has said.” On hearing this Abraham’s slave first bowed down in thanksgiving to Yahweh, and then brought out various articles of silver and gold and clothing which he gave to Rebecca, not forgetting to bestow presents on her brother and mother. Then he and his men had their supper and spent the night there, and in the morning he asked to be allowed to go to his master. And when her mother and brother begged that that the girl might stay with them a few days longer before starting, he said, “Do not stop me, since Yahweh has so far made my journey a success ; let me go to my master.” They answered that they would call the girl and let her decide. So, calling Rebecca, they asked her whether she would go with the man, and when she agreed, they sent her away with her nurse and Abraham’s slave and his men. This is the blessing that they pronounced over Rebecca :

“ Our Sister, become thou a thousand myriads !

May thy seed possess the gate of their foes ! ”

So the man took Rebecca, and she and her maidens followed him on camels. By this time Isaac had moved from <sup>1</sup>the desert of <sup>1</sup>Beer Lahai Roi, and was living in the Negeb. One evening as he wandered in the country, he looked up suddenly and saw camels coming. At the same moment Rebecca, too, looked up, and on seeing Isaac, she dismounted from her camel. Then she asked the slave who it was coming to meet her, and on learning from him that it was his master, she wrapped her veil about her. Then the slave told Isaac all that had happened, so he took Rebecca into <sup>2</sup>his tent<sup>2</sup> and married her, finding in his love for her consolation for the death of his mother.

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<sup>1</sup>...<sup>1</sup> So probably LXX ; MT “ going into.”

<sup>2</sup>...<sup>2</sup> MT “ the tent of his mother, Sarah.”

### 23. OF ABRAHAM'S OTHER CHILDREN.

xxv. 1-6, 18. Abraham married a second wife whose name was Keturah. Her children were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Jishban and Shuah. Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan, and the descendants of Dedan were the Asshurites, the Letushites and the Leummites, while the descendants of Midian were Ephah, Ephier, Hanoah, Abida and Eldaah. These were the children of Keturah. To Isaac Abraham gave all his property, while to the children of his secondary wives he gave presents during his life-time, and sent them away eastwards, so that they should not interfere with his son Isaac, who made his home at Beer Lahai Roi. And (Ishmael) spread from Havilah to Shur, on the borders of Egypt.

### 24. ON THE BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB.

xxv. 21-28. For a long time Rebecca had no children, but at last, in answer to Isaac's earnest entreaties, Yahweh allowed her to become a mother. Even before they were born, the children struggled within her, till she said, "If this is what motherhood means, why has it come upon me?" In her trouble she went to enquire of the oracle of Yahweh, and she was told:—

"Nations twain thou bearest,  
Two peoples from thee shall break forth:  
The one shall master the other,  
The elder the slave of the younger."

At last her time came and the twins were born. The first one was red all over, and as rough as a hairy garment, so he was called Esau.<sup>1</sup> The other was born with his hand gripping Esau's heel, so he was called Jacob.<sup>2</sup> As the lads grew up, Esau became a hunter, living in the open country, whilst Jacob was a civilised man with a home in a tent; and Isaac, being fond of venison, preferred Esau, whilst Jacob was Rebecca's favourite.

### 25. HOW ISAAC WENT TO GERAR AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

xxvi. 1-22. In consequence of a famine—not the one in the time of Abraham—Isaac went to the Philistine king Abimelech

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this name is uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "takes by the heel."

at Gerar. There Yahweh shewed himself to him, saying, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I tell you. If you are content to live as a foreigner in the country, then I will stay with you and make you prosperous, giving you and your descendants all this country, thereby fulfilling the oath which I made to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, giving them all this country, so they shall be the type of prosperity for all the world. For Abraham obeyed me and kept my trust." So Isaac stayed at Gerar, and when its people asked him about Rebecca, he pretended she was his sister, for she was so beautiful that he was afraid that if he admitted she was his wife they would kill him in order to get her for themselves. Time passed and one day Abimelech looked through a window and saw Isaac in familiar intercourse with his wife. So he sent for Isaac, and asked him why he had pretended that she was his sister when all the time she was his wife. Isaac told him he was afraid he might be killed because of her. Then Abimelech said, "What have you been doing to us? One of us might easily have married your wife, and so have brought guilt upon us." So Abimelech issued orders to all his people that anyone who interfered with the man or with his wife should be put to death.

Whilst in that country Isaac engaged in farming, and in that year, through the blessing of Yahweh, he reaped a hundredfold.

So he kept on getting richer and richer, till he had such enormous flocks and herds, and so many slaves, that the Philistines grew jealous of him. They stopped and filled with earth all the wells which the slaves<sup>1</sup> of his father Abraham had dug a generation before. When, therefore, Abimelech asked Isaac to go away because he was too powerful for them, he made his home at Nahal Gerar, where he once more opened the wells they had dug in the days of his father, but which the Philistines had stopped after Abraham's death, giving them the same names as his father had done. But when Isaac's men dug a well and found fresh water, the shepherds of Gerar claimed the water as against the shepherds of Isaac, so they gave it the name of Beer Eshek<sup>2</sup> because there they vexed one another. They then

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; M'T adds "in the days."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "well of vexation."

dug another well, and the Philistines claimed that also, so they called it Sitnah.<sup>1</sup> A third time he dug a well, and there was no dispute over this, so it was called Rehoboth,<sup>2</sup> because, he said, "At last Yahweh has made room for us to expand, and we shall become numerous in the land."

## 26. HOW YAHWEH APPEARED TO ISAAC.

xxvi. 23-25. From there Isaac went to Beersheba, where Yahweh appeared to him on the night of his arrival, and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. I am with you, so you have nothing to fear, and I will give you prosperity and make your descendants very numerous for the sake of my servant Abraham." So building there an altar, he worshipped Yahweh, and made his camp near by, whilst his men once more dug a well.

## 27. HOW BEERSHEBA GOT ITS NAME.<sup>3</sup>

xxvi. 26-33. One day Abimelech, with Ahuzzath, his chief minister, and Picol, his commander-in-chief, came to Isaac from Gerar. Isaac was surprised to see them, because they hated him and had expelled him from amongst them, so he asked them why they had come. They answered, "We can see clearly that Yahweh is on your side, so we should like to have an agreement with you, confirmed by an oath that you will do us no harm, for we did not hurt you but were kind to you and let you go safely, and now you have received prosperity from Yahweh." Then Isaac prepared a meal for them, in the morning they made an oath to one another, and the Philistines left Isaac safely. That very day his men came to tell him that water had been found in the well they were digging, so they called it Shibeah,<sup>4</sup> from which comes the modern name Beersheba.

## 27. HOW JACOB STOLE A BLESSING.<sup>5</sup>

xxvii. 1-45. As Isaac grew old his sight failed, and one day he called Esau, his elder son (and said to him) "Take your weapons, quiver and bow, into the open country, and hunt

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, "hostility."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "room."

<sup>3</sup> Compare p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, "oath."

<sup>5</sup> Compare pp. 61f., 90f.



venison, and bring it me to eat.” But Rebecca heard what Isaac said to his son Esau, and when he had gone out into the open country to hunt venison for his father,<sup>1</sup> she said to her younger son Jacob, “I have this moment heard your father tell Esau your brother to bring him venison, that he may eat in the presence of Yahweh. Now listen to me. (Go to the flock and bring a kid, that I may cook it for you to take to your father to eat.)” Then she took the best clothes of Esau her elder son, for she had them in the house, and dressed her younger son Jacob in them. Then he went in to his father, and Isaac asked his son how it was that he had so quickly found venison.

“Yahweh, your God,” he replied, “drove it in front of me.”

“Are you really my son Esau?” again Isaac asked.

“Yes,” he said.

“Bring it to me, and let me eat some of your venison, my son, so that I may be inspired to bless you.”

So he brought it to him, and he ate it, and he brought him wine which he drank. Then his father Isaac said, “Come here, my son, and let me kiss you,” and when he came, as he kissed him he smelt his clothes, and gave him this blessing:

“See! my son smelleth  
As a field that Yahweh hath blessed!  
Nations shall serve thee,  
Peoples bow down to thee;  
Cursed be they that curse thee,  
Blessed be they that bless thee.”

Hardly had Isaac finished blessing Jacob (when Esau came in) and asked his father to eat of his son’s venison. Isaac was suddenly terrified, and said, “Who then was it who came in with venison which he brought me, and I ate it and blessed him?” When Esau heard his father’s words, he broke into a loud and bitter cry, “Bless me, also, my father!”<sup>2</sup> But Isaac was silent,<sup>2</sup> and Esau cried aloud with bitter tears.

Then Esau thought, “My father will die soon, and then I can kill my brother Jacob.” But Rebecca heard of what her elder son had said, so she sent for her younger son Jacob, and said to him, “I find that your brother Esau means to be revenged

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT “to bring it in.”

<sup>2</sup>.....<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT omits.



on you. Listen to me and fly at once to my brother Laban in Haran, and stay with him for a time, while your brother's anger cools. When he ceases to be angry with you and has forgotten what you have done to him, I will send there and bring you back. I do not want to lose you both on the same day."

## 28. HOW JACOB FOUND YAHWEH AT BETHEL.<sup>1</sup>

xxviii. 10-19. (One night), as Jacob was travelling from Beersheba to Haran, he found Yahweh standing beside him and saying, "I am Yahweh, the God of your father Abraham and of Isaac. I will give to you and to your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants shall be as the grains of the soil, for you shall spread to the east and to the west and to the north and to the south, so that every tribe of men shall regard you and them as the true type of prosperity. I will be with you, and will keep you wherever you go till I bring you back to this land again. I will never leave you till I have done what I have promised." So when Jacob woke up, he said, "Surely Yahweh lives in this place—and I did not know it!" Then he called the place Bethel,<sup>2</sup> though its earlier name was Luz.

## 29. HOW JACOB CAME TO LABAN.<sup>3</sup>

xxix. 1-15. Jacob travelled on, till one day he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks resting beside it. This was the well from which water used to be brought for the flocks, but there was a large stone over the mouth of it, so they used to wait till all the flocks had gathered there, and then roll away the stone to water them, replacing it when they had done. Jacob asked where they had come from, and when they told him they came from Haran, he asked whether they knew Laban, the son of Nahor. They told him they did, so Jacob asked, "Is he well?"

"Yes," they said, "he is; and here is his daughter Rachel coming with his flock."

"It is still too early in the day," he went on, "to collect the sheep for the night; why not water the flocks and go on feeding them?"

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 62f.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "Home of God."

<sup>3</sup> Compare pp. 63f.

“We cannot do that,” they answered, “till all the flocks are here, then they will roll away the stone from the mouth of the well and give the sheep water.” During the conversation Rachel, who was a shepherdess, came up with her father’s flock, and when Jacob saw his cousin with his uncle’s sheep, he came and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well and gave water to Laban’s flock. Then he kissed Rachel, weeping aloud for joy, and telling her that he was a relation of her father’s, the son of Rebecca. She ran at once to tell her father, and as soon as he heard of Jacob, he in turn ran to meet him with embraces and kisses. Then he brought him into his house, and Jacob told him his whole story. When Laban heard it he said, “You really are the nearest of relatives to me,” so Jacob stayed with him for about a month.

### 30. HOW JACOB GOT HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN.<sup>1</sup>

xxix. 18-xxx. 24. Jacob fell in love with Rachel, and offered to be Laban’s servant for seven years in return for her hand. Laban answered, “It is better for me to give her to you than to anyone else; stay here with me.” He loved her so much that the time seemed very short to him, but at last the day came when he could say to Laban, “My time is up; let me marry my bride.” So Laban invited all the people of the place to the wedding feast, but when the evening came it was his daughter Leah instead of Rachel whom he married to Jacob. The next morning Jacob found out that it was Leah, and remonstrated with Laban, charging him with having cheated him because he had bargained for Rachel. Laban said, “That would have been impossible; in our country the elder daughter is always married first. But if you will finish the week’s festivities, then we will give you Rachel also, on condition that you give me seven years more service for her.” Jacob agreed, and at the end of the week he married Rachel, whom he loved more than Leah, and willingly gave another seven years’ service for her.

Yahweh found that Leah was disliked by her husband, so, while Rachel was childless, he gave Leah children. She called her first child—a boy—Reuben,<sup>2</sup> thinking that Yahweh had looked at her distress, and that her husband would now love

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 63f.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., “See! a son.”

her. She then had another son, to whom she gave the name Simeon,<sup>1</sup> "For," she said, "Yahweh has given me this because he heard that my husband did not like me." When her third son was born she said, "I have given my husband three sons; he will certainly be attached to me now." So she called him Levi.<sup>2</sup> Then she had a fourth son, whom she called Judah,<sup>3</sup> saying, "This time I will praise Yahweh"; and after his birth she had no more children for a time.

When Rachel realised that she was having no children (she gave her slave Bilhah to Jacob) that she might have children by her. Leah, too, found she had no more children, so she gave her slave Zilpah to Jacob to marry. Zilpah had a son, and Leah said, "Good luck," and called him Gad.<sup>4</sup> Then Zilpah had another son, and Leah said, "How happy! What happiness is mine! The women will call me happy," so she gave him the name of Asher.<sup>5</sup>

During the wheat harvest, Reuben went into the open country, where he found some mandrakes which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel asked her to give her some of her son's mandrakes. Leah answered, "Is it not enough for you to take away my husband, that you should want to take away my son's mandrakes as well?" Then Rachel offered to let her spend the night with her husband in return for some of her son's mandrakes, and when Jacob came home from the country in the evening, Leah met him outside and told him of the bargain she had made with her son's mandrakes, and how he must spend the night with her. . . .<sup>6</sup> and she called the second Zebulun,<sup>7</sup> thinking that now she had had six sons, her husband would never desert her. She also had a daughter whom she called Dinah.

About the same time (Yahweh) also allowed Rachel to have a son, whom she called Joseph,<sup>8</sup> saying, "May Yahweh give me another!"

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, "hearing."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "attachment."

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, "praise."

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, "luck."

<sup>5</sup> *i.e.*, "happy."

<sup>6</sup> A portion of the narrative has not been preserved.

<sup>7</sup> *i.e.*, "gift," or "honour."

<sup>8</sup> *i.e.*, "may he add."

### 31. HOW JACOB GOT HIS FLOCKS.<sup>1</sup>

xxx. 25-43. After the birth of Joseph, Jacob asked Laban to let him go back to his own home. Laban answered, "Let me beg of you to stay here as a favour to me. I have been taking omens, and I find it is on your account that Yahweh has sent me prosperity."

Jacob said, "You know how I have served you, and how your flocks have grown under my care. When I came, you had only a little; now it has expanded into a great deal, for Yahweh has brought you prosperity wherever I have been. Is it not time that I did something for my own family?"

"What shall I give you?" asked Laban.

Jacob replied: "You need give me nothing; if you will do what I ask you, I will undertake the care of<sup>2</sup> your sheep again. I only ask that you shall separate from them all the spotted and speckled animals, and all the black lambs." At once Laban removed all the spotted and speckled goats with white on them, both male and female, and all the black lambs. These he handed over to his sons, sending them three days' journey away from Jacob, who now had charge of all the rest of Laban's flock. Then Jacob took switches of poplar, almond and plane, and peeled off the bark in patches, so as to show the white. These prepared switches he put before the sheep in the water troughs when they came to drink in the breeding season, so that they bred amongst the switches. The result was that the young were spotted and speckled, and Jacob set these apart, not including them with Laban's flock, but making a flock of his own. He used to put the switches in the troughs when the stronger animals were breeding, but not in the case of the weaker ones, so that the delicate beasts were Laban's and the hardy ones Jacob's. Thus his property grew rapidly, and he became rich in flocks, in slaves of both sexes, in camels and in asses.

### 32. HOW JACOB LEFT LABAN.<sup>3</sup>

xxxi. 1-53. As time went on, Jacob heard of the complaints of Laban's sons, "Jacob has taken all our father had; it is out of our father's property that he has gained all

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<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 64. <sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT adds "I will watch over."

<sup>3</sup> Compare pp. 64ff.

this wealth," whilst Yahuweh bade him go back to his native land and his father's home, at the same time promising to be with him. So one day, when Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Jacob fled with all his property across the Euphrates and travelled towards the Gilead hills. Laban pursued him and camped on Mount Gilead, whilst Jacob camped on Mizpah.

(Laban said) "Why did you deceive me by stealing away in flight without telling me? I would have set you on your way with happy song and the music of tambourine and harp."

(He answered) "I was afraid you would take your daughters from me."

Then Jacob grew angry and began to accuse Laban, "Twenty years was I with you; your sheep and goats never failed with their young, I never ate your rams, I never brought you animals that had been torn by wild beasts—I bore the loss myself, and you always used to take the full price from me, whether it was lost by day or by night. I have perished with heat by day and with cold by night, and small has been my sleep. Come, let us make an agreement, you and I, building a heap of stones as a memorial." So, at Jacob's orders, his kinsmen gathered stones into a heap, by which they ate a solemn meal. Laban called the heap "Jegar Sahaduthah,"<sup>1</sup> and Jacob "Gilead,"<sup>2</sup> "For," he<sup>2</sup> said, "this heap is a witness between us." Laban answered, "Yes, this heap of stones which I have built is witness; I will not pass this heap to attack you, and you shall not pass it to attack me. May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor<sup>3</sup> judge between us!"

### 33. HOW JACOB MET ESAU, AND WHAT HAPPENED AT PENUEL.<sup>4</sup>

xxxii. 4-xxxiii. 17. Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, telling them to give this message to Esau: "I, your servant Jacob, have been visiting Laban, and during the years that I have spent with him I have gained cattle and asses and flocks and slaves, both male and female; therefore I am now sending to tell you, in the

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<sup>1</sup> Both these names mean "heap of witness."

<sup>2</sup> MT has "Laban."

<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT adds "the God of their fathers."

<sup>4</sup> Compare pp. 66f.

hope that you may regard me with favour." When the messengers returned, they told Jacob that they had come to his brother Esau, and found him coming to meet Jacob with an escort of four hundred men. Terrified and distressed by the news, Jacob divided into two companies all the people who were with him, also the flocks, the herds and the camels, in the hope that if Esau found and destroyed one of them, the other might escape. Then he prayed this prayer: "O Yahweh, God of my father Abraham and of my father Isaac, who didst bid me return to the land of my birth that thou mightest grant me prosperity, too small am I for all the acts of kindness and fidelity which thou hast shown to me. With nothing but my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have grown into two companies. Save me, I beseech thee, from the grasp of my brother Esau, for I fear lest he come and smite me, mothers and children too. But thou didst promise to grant me prosperity, and to make my descendants as the sands on the sea-shore, whose grains are too many to be counted." So he stayed where he was that night.

During the night he took his two wives, his two female slaves and his eleven children and sent them across the ford of the Jabbok, whilst he himself was left alone on the other side. There a man wrestled with him until daybreak, and as he wrestled the socket of Jacob's thigh was put out. Then the man asked him what his name was, and when he said "Jacob," he said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob; from now onward it shall be Israel,<sup>1</sup> because you have successfully wrestled with God and man." And as the sun rose, he crossed Penuel, limping because of his thigh. That is why even the modern Israelites do not eat from the socket of the thigh, because it was there on the nerve of the thigh he touched Jacob.

When Jacob saw Esau coming with his four hundred men, he arranged his children with their respective mothers, putting the slave-wives and their children in front, then Leah and her children, and finally Rachel and Joseph, whilst he himself went on in front of them all, bowing low seven times as he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, falling on his neck with tears of joy. When he saw the women and children, he asked who they were.

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, wrestler with God."

So the slave-wives and their children came up with low bows; then, in the same way, Leah and her children and Joseph and Rachel.

Then Esau asked, "What was the company I met?"

And Jacob replied, "I sent them in the hope of securing your favour."

Esau said, "I have all I need, brother, keep what is your own."

But Jacob pressed him with the words, "Not so! If you really regard me with favour, accept this present from me," and at last he agreed to take it. Then Esau said, "Let us move forward, while I go in front." This Jacob refused, saying, "You can see for yourself that the children are tender-footed, and that I have with me suckling sheep and cattle who will all die if they are over-driven even for a single day. Go on ahead, I beg of you, and I will follow slowly, at the pace of the flocks and the children, to rejoin you at Seir." "But at least," said Esau, "let me give you some of my men as escort." When Jacob again begged to be excused Esau turned back at once towards Seir, while Jacob moved to Succoth. There he built a house for himself, and sheds for his cattle, so the place received the name of Succoth.<sup>1</sup>

### 34. HOW SIMEON AND LEVI SLEW THE SHECHEMITES.<sup>2</sup>

xxxiv. 3-31. (Shechem, the son of Hamor) became enamoured of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and so strong was his passion for the girl that he carried her off and ravished her by force. The news came to Jacob, but as his sons were all away in the country with the sheep, he remained quiet till they came back. When they heard of it, they came home in bitter sorrow and hot anger, for the violation of Jacob's daughter was a scandalous folly which had no place in Israelite life. Shechem, however, said to her father and brothers, "If you will regard me with favour, I will do whatever you may tell me. Make the marriage price as high as ever you please, and I will comply with your demands, if you will allow me to marry the girl." But

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., "sheds."

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 67f.



Jacob's sons could not forget what Shechem had done to their sister, so they gave him a deceitful<sup>1</sup> answer. The young man fulfilled their conditions without delay, for he was deeply in love with Jacob's daughter, and was the most important member of his family. But two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, who were Dinah's full brothers, went sword in hand into the unsuspecting city, and massacred every male indiscriminately, including Shechem,<sup>2</sup> and carried Dinah off from his house, because he<sup>3</sup> had ravished their sister. Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought terrible trouble on me, for you have given me a most unsavoury reputation in the country. Our numbers are small and if they combine against us they will utterly destroy me and my family." But they replied, "Surely we could not let him treat our sister as a harlot?"

### 35. HOW REUBEN SINNED.

xxxv. 21, 22. Moving thence, Israel camped on the further side of Migdal Eder. And there one day Reuben committed incest with his father's secondary wife, Bilhah. When Jacob heard of it . . .<sup>4</sup>

### 36. OF THE KINGS OF EDMON.<sup>5</sup>

xxxvi. 31-39. The following are the kings who ruled in Edom before the establishment of the Israelite monarchy: The first king of Edom was called Bela, whose city was named Dinhabah. After his death, Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah succeeded to the throne. After his death Husham of Teman succeeded to the throne. After his death Hadad, the son of Bedad, succeeded to the throne. It was he who defeated the Midianites in Moabite territory, and the name of his city was Avith. After his death Samlah from Masrekah succeeded to the throne. After his death Saul from Rehoboth Hannahar succeeded to the throne. After his death Baal Hanan, the son of Akbor, succeeded to the throne. After his death Hadad succeeded to

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<sup>1</sup> MT omits.

<sup>2</sup> MT prefixes "Hamor and."

<sup>3</sup> MT "they."

<sup>4</sup> The continuation of this narrative has not been preserved.

<sup>5</sup> Compare pp. 92f.



the throne. His city was Peor,<sup>1</sup> and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the son<sup>2</sup> of Me Zahab.

### 37. HOW JOSEPH WAS SOLD INTO SLAVERY <sup>3</sup>

xxxvii. 3-35. Israel was an old man when Joseph was born, so he loved him more than he did any other of his sons, and shewed his preference by making him a long-sleeved coat. And when his brothers found he was his father's favourite, they hated him. One day, when the brothers had gone to feed their father's flock in Shechem, Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers have gone to Shechem to feed the flock; come, let me send you to them." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron to Shechem. There a man found him wandering in the open country, and asked him what he was looking for. He answered, "I am looking for my brothers; can you tell me where they are?" The man said, "They are at Dothan, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph followed them and found them there. Before he came near them they began to discuss killing him, but Judah,<sup>4</sup> on hearing them, tried to save him from them, and said, "No; do not let us take his life." So when Joseph reached them, they stripped him of the long-sleeved coat he was wearing, and then they saw an Ishmaelite caravan, with camels loaded with gum and balm and labdanum, which they were taking down to Egypt. Thereupon Judah said, "What good will it do us if we kill our brother and hide his death? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, rather than lay violent hands on him. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." So the brothers agreed and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for thirty pieces of silver. Then they killed a goat and dipped Joseph's long sleeved coat in its blood, and sent it to their father with this message, "We found this; look well at it and see if it is your son's coat or not." When he looked at it he cried, "It is my son's coat. Oh! Joseph has become the prey of some animal!" All his sons and daughters tried to console him, but he would have none of their comfort, but said, "I will mourn till I go down to Sheol<sup>5</sup> to meet my son." So his father wept for him.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "Pco."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT "daughter."

<sup>3</sup> Compare pp. 69f.

<sup>4</sup> MT "Reuben."

<sup>5</sup> The underground home of the dead, an idea very similar to the Greek "Hades."

### 38. OF JUDAH'S FAMILY.

xxxviii. 1-30. During this period Judah separated from his family, and made friends with an Adullamite named Hirah. Whilst with him he saw and married the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua. A son was born to them, to whom he gave the name of Er, and there followed a second son named Onan and finally a third named Shelah, who was born whilst Judah was living at Kezib. Later Judah married Er his eldest son to a woman named Tamar, but Er displeased Yahweh, who slew him. Thereupon Judah told Onan to marry his brother's widow, and to play the part of brother-in-law by bringing up a family in his brother's name. But Onan, realising that children of the marriage would not be counted as his, took steps to prevent conception, which so displeased Yahweh that he killed him also. Then Judah, fearing that the third son might perish like his brothers, told Tamar to go back to her own home and wait there till Shelah was grown up. This she did.

Years passed. Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died, and after the funeral and mourning ceremonies were over, he went up to Timnah with his friend Hirah of Adullam to shear his sheep. Tamar realised that though Shelah was now grown up she had not been given to him in marriage, so, when she heard that her father-in-law was going to Timnah to shear his sheep, she exchanged her widow's costume for that of a sacred prostitute, and sat by the roadside at the gate of Enaim on the way to Timnah. She had, of course, covered her face with her veil, so that when Judah saw her he took her for a prostitute. Not knowing that she was his daughter-in-law, he stopped and asked her for an assignation. She asked what price he was prepared to pay.

"I will send you a kid from the flock," he said.

"Will you give me a deposit till you send it?"

"What deposit shall I give you?"

"Your signet ring and cord and the staff you are carrying."

So on these terms he had his will, and then Tamar went back and exchanged the prostitute's veil for her widow's costume.

When Judah sent his friend the Adullamite with the kid to recover the deposit from the woman, he could not find her.

So he asked the people of the<sup>1</sup> place where the prostitute was who sat by the roadside at Enaim, but they denied that there had ever been one there. He then went back to Judah, and told him he could not find her, and that the people of the place denied that there was any sacred prostitute there at all. Judah said, "Well, I sent her the kid and you could not find her; she must keep the things, for we cannot have a scandal."

Three months later Judah was told that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, had been guilty of incontinence and was about to have a child. He ordered her to be brought out and burnt. But when she was brought out for execution, she sent a message to her father-in-law, and said, "The father of my child is the man to whom this signet ring, cord and staff belong; look at them, and see whose they are." So Judah looked at them, and acknowledged that she was in the right rather than he, because he had not given her to Shelah. But he had no more intercourse with her.

When her time came, twins were born, and one of them put out his hand. The nurse bound a scarlet thread round it, in order to know which was the elder. But he drew his hand back and his brother was born first. Then the nurse said, "What a violent breaking out!" so he was called Perez.<sup>2</sup> Then came his brother with the scarlet thread on his wrist, so he was called Zerah.<sup>3</sup>

### 39. HOW JOSEPH MET TROUBLE IN EGYPT.<sup>4</sup>

xxxix. 1-23. When Joseph was taken to Egypt, he was bought by an Egyptian from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. With Yahweh's help he prospered while he remained in the house of his Egyptian master, and when the man realised these facts he shewed him favour, making him first his personal servant and then the superintendent of all his property. From that time onwards Yahweh sent prosperity on the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake, his blessing resting on all his indoor and outdoor property alike. So he left everything except the food he ate in Joseph's hands, and no longer exercised any supervision over anything.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "her."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "Breaking."

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the name is not clear.

<sup>4</sup> Compare p. 7of.

Joseph was so handsome that after a time his master's wife fell in love with him, and made improper advances to him. He refused, saying to her, "My master takes no account of anything in his house, leaving everything in my hands. There is no one who holds a higher position in the household than I do; you alone—and that because you are his wife—has he withheld from me. I cannot sin against God by committing such a crime." So, though she pressed him daily, he refused to listen to her repeated solicitations. But at last he went indoors one day to do his work when there was no man of the household about, and she caught hold of his coat and urged him to commit adultery with her. So he slipped out of his coat and ran out of the house. Finding that he had left the house, leaving his coat in her hands, she called the mén of the household and said to them, "See how he has brought this Hebrew fellow in to insult us! He has just come in to outrage me, so I screamed, and when he heard me scream he dropped his coat beside me and rushed out of the house." So she put his coat away till her husband came in, and then told him the same story—"That Hebrew slave whom you brought home one day came in to insult me, and when I screamed, he dropped his coat beside me, and rushed out of the house." When his master heard what his wife had to say about the conduct of his slave, he was very angry, and threw Joseph into the prison where state criminals were confined.

Whilst Joseph was in prison, Yahweh was still with him, and continued to shew him kindness, so that the governor of the prison treated him well. In fact, he gave Joseph complete charge over all the other prisoners, and he was the person who did everything that was done in the prison. The governor exercised no oversight of anything that he entrusted to him, because Yahweh was with him and everything he did succeeded.

#### 40. HOW JOSEPH'S FORTUNE WAS MADE.<sup>1</sup>

xl. 1-xli. 57. One day the court butler and baker offended their master, the king of Egypt (and were thrown into) the prison where Joseph was. Whilst they were there (Joseph asked them, if they were released, to try) to secure his freedom. (The butler was liberated, and eventually, in Pharaoh's hearing,

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 71ff.

said) "At last I have remembered my fault." (He then asked for Joseph's release) and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon. (In Pharaoh's presence he foretold years of plenty), to be followed by years of famine so severe that the plenty would be entirely forgotten. He therefore advised Pharaoh to appoint officials all over the country to collect the harvests of the good years and store them up in the cities. This store would serve as a protection for the land of Egypt during the seven years of famine which were to follow. Pharaoh said to his courtiers, "Where can we find a man so full of divine wisdom as this man is?" Then turning to Joseph, he said, "I hereby appoint you overseer of the whole land of Egypt." So saying he took the signet ring from his finger and put it on that of Joseph, thus setting him in authority over the whole land of Egypt. Then he said to Joseph, "Whilst I keep for myself the supreme power, no man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt without your consent." Then Pharaoh gave him the name of Zaphnathpaaneah, and married him to Asenath, daughter of Potiphera the priest of On.

Then Joseph went through all the land of Egypt, and gathered all the crops of the land of Egypt for seven years, storing in each city the produce of the country round it, quantities far too great to be counted. When the seven years of plenty were over, the seven years of famine which Joseph had foretold began. As the famine grew severe in Egypt, the people appealed to Pharaoh for food, and he told them to go to Joseph and obey his instructions. Then Joseph opened the granaries<sup>1</sup> and sold corn to the Egyptians who were in the grip of the famine, and as the famine was universal, everyone came to Egypt to buy corn of Joseph.

#### 41. HOW JACOB'S SONS CAME TO EGYPT AND FOUND JOSEPH.<sup>2</sup>

xlii. 2-xlv. 28. One day (Israel) said to his sons, "I hear there is corn in Egypt; go there and buy us a little food to save our lives." (But he would not let Benjamin go with them) for fear some harm might come to him. So, because the famine was very severe in Canaan, the sons of Israel came down to

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "all that was in them."

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 74ff.

Egypt with the rest. When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognised them, but he treated them as if he were a stranger, asking them harshly where they had come from.

“From Canaan,” they said, “to buy corn.”

“Not so ; you have come to find out the weak points in the land.”

They said, “No, my Lord, we have come to buy corn. We are all of one family.”

But Joseph insisted that they had come to find out the weak points in the country. (He then asked if they had another brother, and when they told him they had, he said, “Unless you bring your brother with you, you shall never be allowed to see me again.” With that he ordered the corn to be given to them and dismissed them.) When they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to feed his ass, and found his money in the mouth of his sack, and when he told his brothers what had happened their hearts sank.

The famine still continued to be severe, so when they had exhausted the corn which they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go again and buy us a little corn.” “But,” he added, “my son shall not go with you. His brother is dead and he is all I have left ; if any harm were to befall him on the journey, you would have sent my grey head to Sheol with sorrow.”

Then Judah said, “The man absolutely insisted to us that we should not be allowed to see him again unless our brother was with us. If you are ready to let him come with us, we will go to buy you food ; otherwise it is impossible, for he told us we should on no account be allowed to see him unless our brother was with us.”

“Why did you bring this trouble on me,” said Israel, “by telling him you had a brother ?”

“We could not help it,” they answered ; “the man asked us about ourselves and our family—was our father still living ?—had we another brother ?—we only answered his questions. How could we possibly tell that he would insist on our bringing our brother down with us ?”

Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Let the lad go in my charge ; only let us start at once, and save our lives and yours and those of our little ones. I will be surety for him, so that



you may hold me responsible. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, I will bear the guilt of it as long as I live. If we had not wasted so much time we should have been there and back the second time by now."

Then Israel their father said to them, "If there is no alternative, this is what you must do. Take a little of the produce of the land—a little balm, honey, gum, nuts, almonds—and offer it as a present to the man. Take also double the money so as to include that which was returned in the mouths of your sacks; it may have been a mistake. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

They took this present and the double money, and went down to Egypt with Benjamin. At last they found themselves in the presence of Joseph, and when he saw Benjamin with them, he told his steward to take them to his own house, and to kill and cook meat, for he would eat with them at midday. The man did as Joseph told him, and brought them into the house. Finding where they were being taken they were frightened, and said, "We are being brought into the house; it is so that he may get us absolutely into his hands and take us and our asses into slavery because of the money which found its way back into our sacks last time." So they went up to Joseph's steward at the door of the house, and said to him, "Sir, we came down to buy corn once before, and when we reached the first camping-place, we opened our sacks and found our money—full weight—in the mouths of our sacks, so we have brought it back. We have also brought more money to buy corn with; we do not know who put the money in the mouths of our sacks." He answered, "It is all right; do not be afraid, it must have been your God and the God of your ancestors who put treasure in your sacks. I had your money." With this he brought them into Joseph's house, and gave them water to wash their feet and fodder for their asses. But they put the present they had brought on one side till Joseph should come in, for they had heard that he<sup>1</sup> would have his meal there. So when he came in they produced the present<sup>2</sup> and bowed low before him. Then he asked,

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "they."

<sup>2</sup> MT adds: "which was in their hands into the house."

“Are you well? And the old father of whom you told me, is he still living?” They answered, with another bow, that he was well and was still alive. Then he saw Benjamin, his own full brother, and said, “Is this your youngest brother of whom you told me? God be gracious to you, my son!” With these words, Joseph rushed out, for his heart was deeply stirred at the sight of his brother, and he was on the point of breaking into tears. He betook himself to an inner room, where he gave vent to his emotions, then he washed his face and came back with his feelings under complete control. At his order the meal was served, separately for him and for them and for the Egyptians who shared it, for to Egyptians it would be a disgusting thing to sit at the same table with Hebrews. Joseph’s brothers were arranged in his presence in order of age, and they were amazed at the arrangement. During the meal he sent portions from his own table to each of them, and to Benjamin he sent five times as much as to any other. So they ate merrily with him.

Joseph then ordered his steward to fill the men’s sacks as full as they would hold with food, placing each man’s money in the mouth of his sack. In the mouth of the sack belonging to the youngest he was to put not only the money for his corn, but also Joseph’s silver cup. The steward did what Joseph told him, and in the morning the men and their asses were sent on their way. They had not gone far, when Joseph said to his steward, “Run at once after these men, and when you overtake them, ask them why they have returned evil for good. ‘Is not this,’ say, ‘the cup from which my lord drinks, and which he uses for divination, that you have taken? It is a wicked thing you have done.’” The steward did what Joseph told him, and they said to him, “Sir, why do you speak to us like this? We should never think of doing such a thing. Why, we even brought back the money we found in our sacks; how could we steal silver and gold from your master? If it is found in possession of any of us, that man shall die, and the rest of us will become slaves to your master.” He answered, “Very well; it shall be as you say. If the thing is found in the possession of any of you, he shall become my slave, while the rest of you are held innocent.” Then they all hastily let down their sacks to the ground and opened them, searching them from



that of the eldest to that of the youngest, so finally the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

On this discovery they tore their mantles, and, loading their asses, went back to the city. Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in, and they flung themselves on the ground before them. He said to them, "What is this that you have done? Did it not occur to you that such a man as I would certainly use divination?" Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? How can we speak? How can we prove our innocence? God has discovered our crime and we are all your slaves, we and he in whose possession the cup was found." He answered, "I could not think of such a thing; the man on whom the cup was found shall become my slave; the rest of you may go safely to your father."

Then Judah approached him and said:

"O my Lord! May your slave speak a word in your ear without giving offence? For you are to us what Pharaoh is. Your lordship asked us whether we had a father or a brother, and we said we had an aged father, and that there was a son who had been born to him in his old age, who, since his brother's death, is the only surviving son of his mother—he is his father's darling. You then told us that we must bring him down here that you might see him. We said the boy could not leave his father, for if he did, the old man would die. But you told us that unless our youngest brother came with us, we should on no account be allowed to see you again. We went back to our father and told him what you had said, and after a while he bade us come down again to buy a little food. We said, 'We cannot; if our youngest brother comes with us we can, but otherwise we shall on no account be allowed to see the man.' Our father said, 'You know that my wife had only two sons; one of them went out one day, and I have always believed that he became the prey of some wild animal, for I have never seen him since. Now you would take this one also from me, and if any disaster befall him, then you will bring down my grey head to Sheol with calamity.' Now when I go back to my father without the boy—his life is bound up with the lad's,—when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and we shall have brought our father's grey head down to Sheol with sorrow. I am surety for the lad with my father, and I have promised

that if I do not bring him back, I will bear my guilt as long as I live. Let me, then, stay here as your slave, in the boy's place, and let him go back to his father. How can I return to my father without the lad, and face the agony which will fall upon him ? ”

Then Joseph could no longer control himself in the presence of the bystanders, and sent them out. Then he broke into tears, and the Egyptians<sup>1</sup> heard him weeping. He said, “ I am Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Do not be distressed because you sold me here, for the result has been to keep your family alive in the land. (Tell my father to come) and live in the land of Goshen, and describe all my splendour in Egypt to him, and all you have seen. Only be quick ; bring my father here.” Then he fell weeping on the neck of his brother Benjamin, and Benjamin wept on his neck. (So they sent and told) Israel, and he said, “ It is enough ; Joseph my son is still alive ; I will go and see him before I die.”

#### 42. HOW ISRAEL CAME TO EGYPT.<sup>2</sup>

xlvi. 1-xlvii. 6. So Israel set out on his journey, taking all his property with him. He sent Judah to the land of Goshen to Joseph, to appear<sup>3</sup> before him. When he reached that country Joseph had his chariot harnessed, and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. When he appeared before him he fell on his neck, and wept and wept again. Israel said to Joseph, “ Now I can die, for I have seen you, and know that you are still alive.” Then Joseph said to his brothers,<sup>4</sup> “ I will go and tell Pharaoh that my brothers and my family, who have hitherto lived in Canaan, have now come to me, bringing their flocks and herds with them, for they are shepherds and graziers. So when Pharaoh sends for you and asks what your occupation is, tell him that you and your ancestors have been shepherds and graziers all your lives. The Egyptians have a horror of shepherds, so you will certainly be allowed to live in Goshen.” Then Joseph went to tell Pharaoh that his father and brothers,

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT “ Egypt.”

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 76f., 95.

<sup>3</sup> MT “ to give instructions.”

<sup>4</sup> So LXX ; MT adds “ and to his family.”

with all their sheep and cattle and other property, had come from Canaan, and were then in Goshen. He had taken five of his brothers with him, and presented them to Pharaoh, who asked what their occupation was. They replied, "We and our ancestors have been shepherds all our lives. We have come to settle for a time in this country, for the famine is so severe in Canaan that there is no pasture for our flocks. May we have your permission to settle in Goshen?" Pharaoh said to Joseph, "They may settle in Goshen, and if you know of any competent men amongst them, appoint them to take charge of my own flocks."

### 43. HOW JOSEPH MADE ALL THE EGYPTIANS SERFS.

xlvi. 13-26. By this time the famine was so severe in Egypt and Canaan, that all food supplies failed, and the whole land languished. In return for the corn men bought from him, Joseph collected all the money in Egypt, and stored it in the royal coffers. When all the money in Egypt and Canaan was exhausted, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food, or we shall die before your very eyes, for we have no more money." Joseph answered, "If that is so, I will accept your cattle <sup>1</sup>in exchange for food." So they brought their live stock, horses, sheep, cattle, asses, to Joseph in exchange for the food he gave them, and during that year he secured all their live stock in return for bread. At the end of that year and the beginning of the next they came again and said, "We can hide nothing from you; our money has gone and you now have all our cattle, we have nothing left except our bodies and our land. We would ask you, then, to accept both in exchange for food; why should we and our land perish before your eyes? If only you will give us seed so that our lives may be spared and our land may not become desert, our persons and our land will become Pharaoh's absolute property." So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, for men were suffering so in the grip of famine that every one sold his estate, and the whole country passed into Pharaoh's hands, whilst he made the people themselves serfs from one end of the land to the other. The priests'

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<sup>1</sup>.....<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT omits.

and, however, he could not buy, for it was one of their perquisites to live on the customary allowance that Pharaoh had always made them, so that their land did not come into the market. Joseph said to the people, "I have bought you and your land to-day for Pharaoh; here is seed with which you are to sow the land. One fifth of the crop you shall give to Pharaoh and four-fifths you shall keep for sowing and to feed yourselves and your households." They said, "You have saved our lives, and we would win your favour; we will become Pharaoh's serfs." Thus Joseph instituted the modern practice whereby a fifth of the produce of the land goes to Pharaoh, the land of the priests alone being exempt from Pharaoh's claims.

#### 44. HOW ISRAEL DREW NEAR THE TIME OF HIS DEATH.<sup>1</sup>

xlvi. 29-xlviii. 20. Feeling at last that death was near, Israel called his son Joseph to him and said, "If you love me, take a solemn oath, with your hand under my thigh, that you will prove your love and fidelity by not burying me in Egypt. Let me rest with my ancestors; take me up from Egypt to bury me in their tomb." He said, "I will do as you have said." Then, at his request, Joseph took the oath, and Israel bent over the head of his bed.

Recovering his strength, Israel sat upon the bed and said, "Bring (your children) to me, that I may bless them." Now old age had dimmed his eyes almost to blindness. So Joseph brought his two sons, and presented them with his own right hand facing Israel's left, so that Manasseh was at his left-hand but on Israel's right. But Israel crossed his hands and laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, and his left hand on Manasseh's, though he was the elder. When Joseph saw his father lay his right hand on Ephraim's head, he was distressed, and would have moved the hand from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's, saying, "That is wrong, father; this is the elder, lay your right hand on his head." But his father refused, and said, "I know, my son, I know; he shall indeed become a great people, but his younger brother shall be greater than he, for his descendants shall fill the whole world." And he at once blessed them, putting Ephraim before Manasseh.

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 77f., 95f.

## 45. HOW ISRAEL BLESSED HIS SONS.

xlix. 1-27. Then (Israel) said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in ages to come:—

Gather and hear, sons of Jacob,  
Give ear to Israel, your father.

Reuben, my firstborn art thou,  
My strength, the firstfruits of my manhood ;  
Excelling in pride and in passion,  
Wanton as water—excel not !  
To thy father's bed went'st thou up,<sup>1</sup>  
Then defiledst the couch of thy parent.

Brethren are Simeon and Levi,  
Weapons of crime are their daggers ;  
Let my soul never enter their council,  
Nor my spirit be one in their gatherings :  
In their anger they massacre man,  
In their pleasure they mutilate oxen.  
A curse on their wrath—it is passion,  
On their fury—for it is cruel.  
As spoil I divide them in Jacob,  
In Israel I scatter them.

Thee, Judah, thy brethren shall praise,  
Falls thy hand on the neck of thy foes,  
Lowly greet thee the sons of thy father ;  
The whelp of a lion is Judah,  
From the prey, O my son, thou ascendest.  
As a lion he stoopeth, yea, croucheth,  
An old lion—who may bestir him ?  
From Judah the sceptre departs not,  
Nor his staff from between his feet.  
Until Shiloh come,  
Him shall the peoples obey.  
To the vine he bindeth his ass,  
To the red vine his she-ass's foal ;

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<sup>1</sup> MT "he went up."

He washeth his garments in wine,  
In the blood of the grapes his raiment ;  
Darker than wine are his eyes,  
And whiter than milk are his teeth.

By the sea shall Zebulun dwell,  
By the shore of the ships is his home,  
With his flanks upon Zidon.

An ass big-boned is Issachar,  
Between the panniers he croucheth ;  
And he seeth that rest is good,  
And that the land is pleasant ;  
His shoulder he giveth to burdens,  
A labouring slave he becometh.

Dan shall judge his people,  
As one of the tribes of Israel ;  
A serpent be Dan by the roadside,  
A viper beside the path ;  
The heel of the steed he biteth,  
Backward his rider falleth.

For thy salvation, O Yahweh, do I wait.

Gad—the raiders shall raid him,  
And he shall raid their rear.<sup>1</sup>

Asher<sup>1</sup>—his food is rich,  
And dainties royal he provideth.

A free-ranging hind is Naphtali,  
Fair are the fawns<sup>2</sup> she bestoweth.

A fruitful bough is Joseph,  
A fruitful bough by a well,  
. . . .<sup>3</sup> by a wall.

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<sup>1</sup>.....<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT “ the rear. From Asher.”

<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT “ words.”

<sup>3</sup> MT has some words which, in the present state of our knowledge, are unintelligible.

Bitterly shot they at him,  
 The archers tried him sorely ;  
 - But steadfast remaineth his bow,  
 And supple<sup>1</sup> his arms and his hands,<sup>1</sup>  
 Through the hands of the mighty of Jacob,  
 And the name of the rock of Israel,  
 Through the God of thy father that helpeth thee,  
 Through El<sup>2</sup> Shaddai who doth bless thee,  
 Blessings of heaven above,  
 And blessings of Ocean<sup>3</sup> beneath,  
 Blessings of breast and of womb,  
 Blessings ancestral—great are they,—  
 Blessings of mountains eternal,  
 Produce of hills everlasting—  
 Be these on the head of Joseph,  
 On the brow of the Prince of his brethren.

Wolf-like doth Benjamin raven ;  
 At morn the prey he devoureth,  
 At eve the spoil he divideth.”

#### 46. HOW ISRAEL DIED AND WAS BURIED.<sup>4</sup>

xlix. 33-1. 14. So (Israel) lifted his feet into the bed (and died). Then Joseph fell on his face weeping and kissing him, and ordered the physicians amongst his slaves to embalm his father. This they did, spending forty days over the task, which is the usual period. Then Joseph said to the officers of Pharaoh's household, “I beg of you to prove your favour to me by speaking to Pharaoh, and by telling him of the oath, which my father exacted of me as he lay dying, that I would bury him in the tomb he had prepared in Canaan, and to say that now I would go to bury my father and return.” Pharaoh gave him permission to go and bury his father in accordance with his oath, so Joseph went up for the purpose. With him went all Pharaoh's servants, the officers of his household, all

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<sup>1</sup>.....I MT “the arms of his hands.”

<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT omits.

<sup>3</sup> MT inserts “crouching.”

<sup>4</sup> Compare pp. 78, 96.

the officials of the land of Egypt, Joseph's own family and that of his father—women and children and flocks and herds were left in Goshen. Chariots and horsemen, too, were with them, and there was a very large caravan. At length they came to Goren Haatad beyond the Jordan, and they made great and sorrowful lamentation there, lasting for seven days. When the Canaanites who lived in Goren Haatad saw it, they said, "This is a very grievous mourning the Egyptians have," so they called the place Abel Mizraim<sup>1</sup>—it is beyond Jordan. So when he had buried his father, Joseph came back to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to the funeral.

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, "Mourning of Egypt."



# *THE STORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THINGS, AS TOLD IN NORTHERN ISRAEL.*

## **I. HOW GOD PROMISED ABRAM A SON.<sup>1</sup>**

xv. 1-16. Some time afterwards God appearing to (Abram) in a vision, said, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield." Abram said, "You have given me no son<sup>2</sup> and my heir is a man of Damascus—Eliezer."<sup>2</sup> So he took him outside and said, "Now look at the sky and count the stars." Then he made Abram fall into a trance, and said to him, "Your descendants shall live as strangers in a foreign land, being oppressed as slaves for four hundred years, but in the end I will judge the nation which has enslaved them, so that they shall escape with great wealth. As for yourself, you shall die a peaceful death, and shall come to the grave at a ripe old age. Your descendants will not come back for four generations, because the Amorites have not yet reached their limit of wickedness."

## **2. HOW ABRAHAM WENT TO GERAR AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.**

xx. 1-17. Abraham's<sup>3</sup> next migration was to the Negeb, where he made his headquarters between Kadesh and Shur, living as a foreigner at Gerar. Finding that Abraham said of Sarah—who was really his wife—that she was his sister, Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took her into his harem. But that night God came to him in a dream and said to him, "You must die because of the woman you have taken; she is married." Now Abimelech had kept away from her, so he said, "Surely you will not kill the people who are in the right? He claimed her as his sister, and she claimed him as her brother; what I did was done in all innocence and guilelessness." God answered in his dream, "It is just because I know the innocence of your heart that I am keeping you from her so that you may not sin against me. Send her back to the man without delay, for he is a prophet, and you will save your life

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 19, 86ff.

<sup>2</sup> MT is very obscure, but this is probably the original meaning.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 20, note 6.

by securing his prayers on your behalf. But if you do not send her back, then be assured that you and all who belong to you will certainly die.”

So the next morning Abimelech assembled all his household, and terrified them by telling them what he had heard. He then sent for Abraham, and said, “What have you been doing to us? What harm have I done you that you should bring great sin on me and my kingdom? Your conduct to me has been utterly unjustifiable. Whatever possessed you to do it?” Abraham said, “I thought that as there was no religion here they would kill me for the sake of my wife. Besides, before I married her she really was my sister, on the father’s side, though not on the mother’s. So when God sent me wandering from my ancestral home, I begged her to do me the kindness of saying I was her brother.” Thereupon Abimelech not only sent Sarah, Abraham’s wife, back to him, but also gave him sheep, cattle and slaves, male and female. Further, he told Sarah he had given her brother a thousand pieces of silver as compensation for all <sup>1</sup>that had befallen her,<sup>1</sup> which would completely restore her reputation. Finally, in answer to Abraham’s prayer, God cured Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves, so that they were again able to have children.

### 3. HOW HAGAR AND ISHMAEL WERE DRIVEN INTO THE DESERT.

xxi. 6-21. (When Isaac was born), Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me.” In time Isaac<sup>2</sup> grew, and Abraham made a great feast on the day he was weaned. And Sarah saw the boy whom the Egyptian slave Hagar had borne to Abraham, playing <sup>3</sup>with Isaac,<sup>3</sup> so she said to Abraham, “You must expel her son, for I cannot bear this slave girl’s son to share the inheritance with my boy.” Abraham was greatly distressed on account of his son, till God said to him, “Do not be distressed on account of the lad and your slave; do exactly what Sarah tells you, for your descent will be traced through Isaac. The slave girl’s son, however, for your sake, I will make

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<sup>1</sup>.....<sup>1</sup> MT “that were with her.”

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, “laughter.”

<sup>3</sup>.....<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT omits.

into a great<sup>1</sup> nation.” Next morning Abraham gave Hagar some bread and a skin of water, and, <sup>2</sup>putting her son on her shoulder,<sup>2</sup> sent her away. She wandered in the desert of Beer Sheba till the water in the skin was exhausted, when she put the boy down under one of the bushes, and went and sat helpless about a bowshot off, for she felt she could not bear to see her son die. The boy broke into tears, and God heard him. Then the angel of God called from the sky to Hagar, and asked what was the matter with her. “Do not be frightened,” he said, “God has heard the boy where he is. Come, pick him up and hold him firmly ; I will make him into a great nation.” Then God gave her clear vision, and she saw a well, where she filled the skin with water and gave it to the boy to drink. So God was with the boy, and as he grew up he lived in the desert, becoming an archer. His home was the desert of Paran; and his mother found him a wife from Egypt.

#### 4. HOW ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH MADE A TREATY.<sup>3</sup>

xxi. 22-32. About that time Abimelech and his commander-in-chief Picol said to Abraham, “You enjoy the help and presence of God ; I pray you take an oath in his name here that you will never deal harshly with me or my family or my descendants, but will always be as kind to me and the country whose hospitality you have enjoyed as I have been to you.” Abraham agreed, and gave sheep and cattle to Abimelech to complete the agreement they had made. So they called the place Beer Sheba,<sup>4</sup> because it was there that they took an oath, and Abimelech and his commander-in-chief Picol went back to their home.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5. HOW GOD TESTED ABRAHAM.

xxii. 1-19. Some years later, God put Abraham to the test. He spoke to him, and when he replied, said to him, “Take your only son Isaac, whom you love so well, to the land of Moriah,

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT omits.

<sup>2</sup> .....<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT has the words in a different order.

<sup>3</sup> Compare pp. 24f., 31.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, “Well of the oath.”

<sup>5</sup> MT has “the land of the Philistines.”

where you must sacrifice him as a whole burnt offering on a peak which I shall tell you." The next morning Abraham harnessed his ass, cut wood for a burnt offering, and started for the mountain which God had mentioned, taking with him two servants and his son Isaac. After travelling for three days, Abraham saw the mountain in the distance, and told the servants to wait with the ass, while he and the boy went on, saying that they would come back when they had finished their devotions. The wood he put on Isaac's back, while he himself took the fire and the sacrificial knife. As they walked on together, Isaac said to his father, "Father!"

"Yes," said his father.

"Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep which we are to offer?"

"God will provide the sheep for himself." And with this they walked on again.

At length they reached the place of which God had spoken. There Abraham built up his altar, and, after arranging the wood on it, laid his son Isaac bound upon the wood. But as he grasped the knife to kill his son, the angel of God<sup>1</sup> called to him from the sky, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes!" he said. "Do not lift your hand to the lad: do nothing whatever to him! Now I know your piety is real,—so real that you would not withhold even your only son from me." Abraham looked up, and found a ram caught by its horns in the brushwood. This he took, and sacrificed it in place of his son, giving the place the name of Yahweh Yeraeh,<sup>2</sup> "For," he said, "Yahweh has appeared in the mountain to-day."

Again the angel of God called to Abraham from the sky, and said, "I have sworn by myself, oracle of Yahweh,<sup>3</sup> that because you have done this and have not withheld your only son from me, I will indeed bless you, and I really will make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore, and they shall possess the cities of their enemies. Because you have obeyed me, all nations shall regard them as the type of the prosperous people."

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<sup>1</sup> So some Versions; MT "Yahweh."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "appears."

<sup>3</sup> A phrase used of words dictated by God.

Then they went back to the servants, and so returned to Beer Sheba, which Abraham made his home from that time on.

## 6. HOW JACOB BOUGHT ESAU'S BIRTHRIGHT.

xxv. 29-34. One day Jacob was stewing something when Esau came in exhausted from the open country, and said, "Give me my fill of that red stuff, for I am exhausted." That is why the name of Edom<sup>1</sup> was given to him.

"Will you sell me your birthright for it?" Jacob said.

"I am dying," Esau said; "what is the use of a birthright to me?"

"Swear to it," Jacob said.

So when Esau had sworn to surrender his birthright to Jacob he gave him bread and lentil soup, which he ate and drank before going away. This was all the value that Esau set on his birthright.

## 7. HOW JACOB STOLE ESAU'S BLESSING.<sup>2</sup>

xxvii. 1-41. One day (Isaac) called his son (Esau), and when he answered, he said to him, "I am growing old, and I cannot tell how much longer I have to live. Make me the kind of savoury stew I like so much, that I may give you a blessing before I die." (Rebecca said to Jacob, "I have this moment heard your father telling your brother) to make him the kind of savoury stew he likes so much, that he may bestow on him a blessing before he dies. (Listen) to what I tell you. Go to the flock and bring me two fat kids, that I may make them into your father's favourite savoury stew. This you shall take to your father, and when he has eaten it he will bless you before he dies." "But," objected Jacob to his mother, "remember my brother Esau is a hairy man, whilst my skin is smooth. Suppose my father feels me? If he does, he will find out that I am deceiving him, and I shall get a curse instead of a blessing." Rebecca answered, "If only you will listen to me and go and get me what I asked for, I will bear any curse that falls on you."

So Jacob went and brought her what she wanted, and when she had made his father's favourite savoury stew, she put the skins of the kids on Jacob's hands and on the smooth parts of his neck. Then she gave the stew and the bread she had made to Jacob.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., "red."

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 31ff., 90ff.

He said, "Father!" and his father answered, "Yes, who are you, my son?" Jacob answered his father, "I am your elder son, Esau. I have done what you told me; now sit up and eat of my venison, that you may bless me." Isaac said to Jacob, "Come here, and let me feel you, to see if you really are Esau or not." He went up to him, and when he had felt him he said, "The voice sounds like Jacob, but the hands feel like Esau." Thus he failed to detect him because his hands were as hairy as those of his brother Esau. Then he blessed him:—

"God give thee of heaven's dew,  
Of earth's fatness, abundance of corn and wine.  
Be thou lord over thy brethren,  
Let thy mother's sons bow down to thee."

Hardly had Jacob left Isaac, when Esau came in from his hunting, and he too made a savoury stew which he brought to his father that he might bless him. Isaac said, "My son, who are you?" Esau replied, "I am Esau, your elder son." He said, "Your brother came treacherously and stole your blessing." He answered, "Is it because he is named Jacob that he has now twice got the better of me? Once he took my birthright, and now he has taken my blessing. Have you not a blessing in reserve for me?" Isaac replied, "I have made him your master, and I have given him all his brothers as slaves, with corn and wine to support him; what can I do for you, my son?" But when Esau pressed him, "Have you only one blessing, father? Oh! bless me too!" the father answered,

"Far from the fat of the land  
Thy dwelling shall be,  
And far from the dew of the heavens.  
By thy sword shalt thou live,  
Thy brother's slave shalt thou be.  
But when thou art restive  
Thou shalt shake his yoke from thy neck."

Then Esau cherished hatred against Jacob because of the blessing which his father had bestowed upon him.

## 8. HOW JACOB FOUND GOD'S HOME.<sup>1</sup>

xxviii. 10-22. (As Jacob travelled towards the home of Laban) he happened to lie down one night in a certain place,

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<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 33.

using a stone for a pillow. There he had a dream in which he saw a ladder set up on earth, whose top reached the sky, with the angel<sup>1</sup> of God going up and down by it. He was afraid, and thought, "What a terrible place this is! It must be the home of God, the gate of the sky." Next morning he set up the stone on which his head had rested as a sacred pillar, pouring oil on its top. Next he made this vow, "If God will help me and watch over me during my present journey, giving me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I come home safely, then this pillar which I have set up shall be a sanctuary, and I will surely give you a tenth of all you give me."

## 9. HOW JACOB GOT HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN.<sup>2</sup>

xxix. 1-23. Jacob came on foot to the land of the Sons of the East, (where he met Laban and offered to take service with him). Laban said to him, "You are a relative of mine; it is not right that you should give me service for nothing. What wages will you have?" Now Laban had two daughters, the elder being called Leah and the younger Rachel, and whilst Leah was weak-eyed, Rachel was very beautiful. (And Jacob asked and received both of them in marriage.) Rachel became jealous of her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." Jacob was very angry with Rachel and said, "Can I take the place of God? It is he who has kept you from having children." Rachel said, "Here is my slave Bilhah; marry her, and she may bear children for me." So Jacob married her, and when her son was born, Rachel said, "God has judged me and heard my call," so she gave him the name of Dan.<sup>3</sup>

Bilhah had a second son, and Rachel said, "A divine fight have I fought with my sister," giving him the name of Naphtali.<sup>4</sup>

At length, in answer to her prayers, God allowed Leah to bear a fifth<sup>5</sup> son to Jacob. She called him Issachar,<sup>6</sup> "Because," she said, "God has rewarded me for giving Jacob my slave." One more son, a sixth,<sup>5</sup> was born to her, and with the words,

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<sup>1</sup> MT plural. <sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 34f. <sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, "judge." <sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, "struggle."

<sup>5</sup>.....<sup>5</sup> It is possible that these figures do not belong to the original form of this narrative. If they do, the portion describing the birth of the first four sons has not been preserved.

<sup>6</sup> "reward."



“God has given me rich dower,” (she called him Zebulun).<sup>1</sup> Finally God answered Rachel’s prayer for a son, and when he was born she said, “God has taken away my reproach,” and called him Joseph.<sup>2</sup>

## 10. HOW JACOB GOT HIS FLOCKS.<sup>3</sup>

xxx. 25-34. (Eventually Jacob said to Laban), “You know how well I have worked for you ; let me take away the wives and children with whom you have paid me.”

“Name your own pay, then,” Laban replied ; “I shall have to give you what you ask.”

“I will go all through your flocks and take away as my pay all the speckled and spotted animals. To-morrow morning, to test my honesty, you shall come and look at my share, and if you find a single animal that is not spotted<sup>4</sup> and speckled<sup>5</sup> you can call it stolen.” To this Laban agreed.

## 11. HOW JACOB LEFT LABAN.<sup>6</sup>

xxxi. 2-xxxii. 1. As time went on, Jacob realised that Laban’s attitude towards him had changed. Sending for Rachel and Leah to come to the flock in the open country, he said to them, “I find your father’s attitude towards me has changed. You know that I have served him with all my strength, whilst he has cheated me and changed my wages time after time. But God has not allowed him to do me any harm. Whenever he has said that the spotted animals were to be my wages, all the young animals have been born spotted. Whenever he has said the striped animals were to be my wages all the young have been born striped. Thus God has been taking away your father’s flocks and giving them to me. Indeed, I once had a dream in the breeding season, and all the breeding rams were speckled and spotted and mottled. Then I dreamt that the angel of God spoke to me, and when I answered, he said, ‘Look round, and see how all the breeding rams are speckled and spotted and mottled ; this is because I

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, “gift.”

<sup>3</sup> Compare p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> MT adds “among the sheep.”

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, “removal”(?)

<sup>4</sup> MT adds “among the goats.”

<sup>6</sup> Compare pp. 36f.



have seen what Laban has been doing to you. I am the God <sup>1</sup>who appeared to you<sup>1</sup> in Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and made a vow. Get out of this land and go back to the country where you were born.' ” Rachel and Leah answered, “ We have no share or lot in our father’s property. He treats us as if we were strangers, because he has sold us and has devoured all our dowry. Truly all the property God has taken from our father belongs of right to us and to our children. Do exactly what God has told you.” On hearing this, Jacob took his children and his wives on camels, and drove off all his flocks. Rachel, meanwhile, had stolen her father’s household god.

Thus Jacob circumvented Laban the Aramean, by not telling him when he took his departure. Indeed, it was three days before Laban heard of Jacob’s flight. He immediately collected his fellow-tribesmen and followed Jacob for seven days, overtaking him in the Gilead hills. One night God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream, and warned him to say nothing, good or bad, to Jacob. But he said to him, “ Why did you circumvent me, and carry off my daughters like prisoners of war, without allowing me to kiss my grandsons or my daughters ? What a foolish thing you have done ! I might have injured you, but the God of your father has forbidden me to say anything to you, good or bad. You pretend to have left me because you wanted to see your own home, but why have you stolen my god ? ” Jacob, not knowing that Rachel had stolen the god, answered, “ If your god is discovered in the possession of any of us, the thief shall die ; if you can, in the presence of your fellow-tribesmen, identify anything of yours, take it away with you.” So Laban searched the tents of Jacob, of the two slave-wives and of Leah unsuccessfully. Leaving Leah’s tent, he went into Rachel’s, where he found her sitting on the camel’s litter, where she had hidden the god. When Laban had felt all round the tent and found nothing, she said to her father, “ Please excuse me from getting up in your presence ; I am suffering from my seasonal trouble.” So he continued his search, but failed to find the god.

Then Jacob said to Laban, “ What harm have I done ? What sin have I committed that you should follow me ? If, in your thorough search of my property, you have found anything

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1.....1 So LXX ; MT omits.

whatever that belongs to you, lay it before our fellow-tribesmen, and let them decide the case between us. For the last twenty years I have been a slave in your household, serving you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your sheep. Time after time you changed my wages, and if the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, you would have sent me away now empty-handed. It is God who has seen what I have suffered and how I have toiled, and so has settled the matter to-night." Laban replied, "The women and the children and the sheep—everything you see here—belong to me; what am I to do about these daughters of mine and their children?" Then Jacob took a stone and set it up to serve as a sacred pillar, of which (Laban) said, "May God keep watch between us when we are out of one another's sight! If you ill-treat my daughters or give them any rival wives, when there is no man present to see to it, remember that God is the witness between us." So Jacob took the oath by the Fear of Isaac his father, then, sending for his fellow-tribesmen to share his meal, he offered sacrifice, and they all ate their meal, spending the night on the mountain. In the morning Laban kissed his children, and after giving them his blessing returned to his home.

## 12. HOW JACOB PREPARED TO MEET ESAU.<sup>1</sup>

xxxii. 2-22. Jacob continued his journey till he was met by the angels of God. When he saw them he said, "This is God's camp," and called the place Mahanaim.<sup>2</sup> (Hearing that Esau was coming to meet him) he prepared from what he had with him the following as a present: Two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty she-camels with colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses. These droves he put separately in charge of slaves of his with orders to follow one another at some distance. He gave the first slave these orders, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks whose you are, where you are going, and whose these animals are, tell him that they are a present for Esau from his brother, who is following." To the second and the third and all who followed the droves he

<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 37f.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "two camps."

gave exactly the same orders, bidding them all add that Jacob himself was coming behind. "Thus," he thought, "I may appease Esau with the present which goes in front of me, and perhaps he will receive me kindly, when he actually does see me." Then the present was sent on in front, while Jacob spent the night in his camp.

### 13. HOW JACOB WRESTLED AT PENUEL.<sup>1</sup>

xxxii. 26-31. (During the night a man wrestled with Jacob) and when he found that he could not defeat him, he touched the socket of his thigh, saying, "Let me go; here is the dawn!" He answered, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Then Jacob asked what his name was, and he said, "Why do you ask my name?" and blessed him. Jacob called the place Penuel,<sup>2</sup> because there he had seen God face to face and escaped alive.

### 14. HOW JACOB MET ESAU.

xxxiii. 4-10. (When Jacob met Esau) he embraced and kissed him. (Esau asked about the women and children, and Jacob) said, "They are the children whom God has bestowed on me. I have seen you as man sees God, and you have been kind to me. Accept the present which has been sent to you. God has been very good to me and I have all I need."

### 15. HOW JACOB'S SONS MASSACRED THE SHECHEMITES.<sup>3</sup>

xxxiii. 18-xxxiv. 29. (Jacob then travelled as far as Shechem) and camped outside the city, where he bought from Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred Keshitah<sup>4</sup> the land on which his camp stood. There he set up an altar which he called El Elohe Israel.<sup>5</sup> One day Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to see the women of the place. There she was seen by Shechem, the son of Hamor, the prince of the country. He talked kindly to her, and afterwards asked his father Hamor

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<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "face of God."

<sup>3</sup> Compare p. 39f.

<sup>4</sup> A coin or sum of money whose exact value is no longer known.

<sup>5</sup> *i.e.*, "El, the god of Israel."

to get her hand in marriage for him. So Hamor, the father of Shechem, went to Jacob and said to him, "Shechem my son has fallen in love with your daughter; give him her hand in marriage. Make a general marriage treaty with us, giving us your daughters and receiving ours. Make your home with us; you shall be free of the whole country, live there, trade there, and make it your home." They answered, "We cannot agree to give our sister to an uncircumcised man; that would be revolting to us. We will only consent on condition that you become like us, with every male circumcised as we have been. If you will do this, we will give you our women and accept your women, living with you and uniting into a single people; but if you do not agree to be circumcised, we will take our daughters away with us." Hamor, well satisfied with what they said, came with his son Shechem to the city gate and said to their fellow-countrymen, "These men are well-disposed towards us; let them live in our land and carry on their business there; the land is wide enough for them on all sides. Let us also marry their daughters, and give them ours. This is, however, the condition on which they will agree to live with us and to form a single people with us,—that all our males should be circumcised like them. If we do this, then their flocks, property and cattle will belong to us, so let us agree that they may live with us." All who passed through the city gate agreed with Hamor and Shechem, and all their males were circumcised. Three days later, before they had time to recover from the operation, the sons of Jacob came on them, wounded as they were, killing every male, and took all their sheep and cattle and asses, all that they had inside the city and outside, and carried off all their wealth, making slaves of their women and their little ones, taking as spoil all that they found in the houses.<sup>1</sup>

## 16. HOW JACOB CAME BACK TO BETHEL.<sup>2</sup>

xxxv. 1-14. One day God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel to live, building there an altar to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his family and all who were with him, "Remove the foreign gods who are amongst you, and purify yourselves and change your

<sup>1</sup> MT has singular.

<sup>2</sup> Compare p. 91.

clothes. Then we can go up to Bethel, where I must build an altar to the God who answered me at the time when I was in trouble, and has been with me wherever I have gone." Then they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had, together with the rings in their ears. Jacob buried them under the terebinth near Shechem. When they moved camp, the cities in their neighbourhood were so afraid of their God that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. When he and all his people reached Bethel, he built an altar, calling the place Bethel, because it was there that God appeared to him during his flight from his brother. Rebecca's foster-mother, Deborah, had died there, and had been buried under the oak tree called the Oak of Tears. There Jacob set up a sacred pillar, pouring a libation on it and anointing it with oil.

### 17. HOW BENJAMIN WAS BORN.

xxxv. 16-20. They left Bethel, and when they were a short distance from Ephratah, Rachel gave birth to a child, with terrible suffering. In the midst of her agony, the midwife said to her, "Courage! here is another son for you." But as her spirit failed in death she called her son Benoni,<sup>1</sup> though his father gave him the name of Benjamin.<sup>2</sup> So she died, and was buried on the road to Ephratah, *i.e.* Bethlehem. By the grave Jacob set up a sacred pillar, the modern Pillar of Rachel's Tomb.

### 18. OF JOSEPH'S DREAMS.<sup>3</sup>

xxxvii. 2-11. (Joseph) was a lad with the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, his father's wives. He used to tell tales of their misdeeds to his father, so that they could not speak kindly to him at all. One night he had a dream, which he told to his brothers, thereby aggravating their hatred. "Listen to this dream of mine," he said. "As we were binding sheaves in the country, I saw my sheaf lift itself up and stand upright, while your sheaves got round it and bowed down to it." His brothers said, "Do

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, "Son of my sorrow."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, "Son of the right hand."

<sup>3</sup> Compare p. 41.

you think you are going to be our king and Lord ? ” Naturally they hated him still more because of his dream and the way he had told it to them. Another night he had another dream, which he told to his brothers—“ I dreamed that the sun and moon and the eleven stars all bowed down to me.” This time<sup>1</sup> his father rebuked him, saying, “ What is this dream of yours ? Am I to come with your mother and brothers and bow down at your feet ? ” But whilst his brothers were merely jealous, his father remembered what he had said.

## 19. HOW JOSEPH WAS KIDNAPPED.<sup>2</sup>

xxxvii. 13-34. One day (his father called him) and when he answered, he told him to go and bring back news of the welfare of his brothers and of the flock. Seeing him in the distance, his brothers said to one another, “ Here comes the dreamer ! Let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a wild animal has eaten him ! Then we shall see what his dreams will come to ! ” But Reuben, in the hope that he might be able to rescue him and bring him back to his father, said to them, “ Do not shed blood ; drop him without hurting him into this pit, here in the desert.” They agreed, and took him and dropped him into a pit, which, fortunately, had no water in it.

Whilst they were eating their meal, some Midianite traders came by and pulled Joseph up from the pit, and carried him down to Egypt. When Reuben went back to the pit and found Joseph gone, he tore his clothes in sorrow, and returning to his brothers, said, “ The boy is gone ! Oh me ! where shall I go ? ” Coming<sup>3</sup> home to their father, (they told) him that some wild animal had eaten Joseph, and when he heard it he tore his cloak and put on mourning, and grieved for a long time.

## 20. HOW JOSEPH WAS A SLAVE IN EGYPT.<sup>4</sup>

xxxvii. 36, xl. 1-23. On reaching Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Pharaoh’s chief executioner, a eunuch named Potiphar. Some time afterwards Pharaoh was offended with his head butler and his head baker, and he imprisoned them in the chief executioner’s house. It was to Joseph that his master entrusted them, and he waited on them for some time.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT inserts “ and he told it to his father and his brother.”

<sup>2</sup> Compare p 41.    <sup>3</sup> MT “ and they brought.”    <sup>4</sup> Compare p. 44f.

One night they both had dreams with different meanings. When Jacob came in to them next morning, seeing that they were worried, he asked these two eunuchs of Pharaoh's who were imprisoned in his master's house, why they looked so sad. They said, "We have had dreams, and there is no interpreter here." Joseph said, "Dream interpretation belongs to God; tell me your dreams." Hearing this the head butler told Joseph his dream: "I dreamed there was in front of me a vine with three branches on it. As it budded it blossomed, till the grapes ripened. I was holding Pharaoh's cup, which I placed in Pharaoh's hand after pressing the grapes into it." Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation: the three branches are three days, and mean that in three days' time Pharaoh will remove you and restore you to your position, so that you will once more serve Pharaoh with his cup, as you used to do when you were his butler. Only when prosperity has come to you once more, then I beg you to remember me and be kind to me. See that my name is brought before Pharaoh, for I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews."

When the head baker found that the meaning of the dream was good, he said to Joseph, "I too dreamed I had three baskets of white bread on my head. In the top one were all kinds of confectionery for Pharaoh's own table, but the birds ate them all from the basket on my head." Joseph answered, "This is the interpretation: The three baskets mean three days, and in three days' time Pharaoh will remove you and hang you on a tree till the birds have eaten the flesh from you."

Three days later was Pharaoh's birthday, when he made a feast for all his officials. On this occasion he removed his head butler and head baker, restoring the former to his duties, and hanging the latter, as Joseph had foretold in interpreting the dreams. But the head butler, so far from remembering Joseph, forgot him altogether.

## 21. HOW JOSEPH INTERPRETED PHARAOH'S DREAMS.<sup>1</sup>

xli. 1-57. One night, about two years later, Pharaoh dreamed that, as he stood by the river, he saw seven beautiful fat cows come up out of the river and begin to browse on the sedge.

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 45ff.



After them there came up seven other cows, ugly and thin, which stood by the cows on the river bank. Then the thin, ugly cows ate up the fat beautiful ones—and at this point Pharaoh woke up. When he got off to sleep again he had a second dream in which he saw seven rich and good ears of corn coming up on a single stalk. After them there sprouted seven other ears, thin and blasted by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the rich and full ones—and again Pharaoh woke up to find it a dream. So distressed was Pharaoh with his dreams, that in the morning he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, and, telling them the dreams, asked them to interpret them. When Pharaoh failed to find an adequate interpreter amongst them, the Chief Butler said to him, “Pharaoh was once displeased with his servants, and imprisoned them,<sup>1</sup> in the house of the Chief Executioner, myself and the Chief Baker. One night we both had dreams, each with a different meaning, and we found there a young Hebrew who was a slave of the Chief Executioner’s. When we told him our dreams he gave to us the proper interpretation, and it befell as he foretold; I was restored to my office, and the Baker was hanged.”

Pharaoh immediately sent for Joseph, and as soon as he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came into the royal presence. Pharaoh said, “I have had a dream which no one can interpret, and they tell me you can interpret a dream merely by hearing it.” Joseph answered, “It is not I, but God. May he send Pharaoh a good answer!” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I dreamed that as I stood by the banks of the river, I saw seven fat and beautiful cows come up out of the river and begin to browse on the sedge. After them there came up seven other cows, ugly and lean—I have never seen such bad cows in all the land of Egypt. The lean and ugly cows ate up the first fat ones. They passed right into them, but no one would have known that they had done so, for they looked just as bad as they had done at first. Then I woke up,<sup>2</sup> but when I went off to sleep again<sup>2</sup> I had a second dream, in which I saw seven full rich ears of corn spring up on one stalk. After them there sprouted seven other ears, thin and blasted by the east wind, and the thin ears swallowed

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<sup>1</sup> MT “me.”

<sup>2</sup>.....<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT omits.



up the full ears. I have told the magicians, but none amongst them can interpret this."

Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's two dreams mean the same thing; it is God who has been shewing Pharaoh what he is doing. The seven good cows are seven years, and so are the seven good ears; both dreams mean the same thing. The seven lean and ugly cows, and the seven ears which were thin and blasted by the east wind, are seven years of famine. It is as I said, God has been shewing Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will be seven years of great plenty all over the land of Egypt, followed by seven years of famine so severe that none shall remember any of the plenty, such destruction will the famine cause in the country. The fact that the dream was repeated was intended to shew Pharaoh that the thing was absolutely settled by God, who will make no delay. Pharaoh would be well advised to seek and appoint a wise and prudent man over the country, to take a fifth part of the produce of the land during the seven years of plenty, thus amassing corn under Pharaoh's authority, so that the whole land may not perish from famine."

So pleased were Pharaoh and all his court with this advice, that he said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, it is clear there is none so wise and prudent as you are; you shall be my Prime Minister, your orders shall be obeyed by all my people, and only in the matter of the throne itself will I be your superior." Then Pharaoh had him dressed in linen, had a gold chain put round his neck, gave him the second chariot to ride in, and had the cry "<sup>1</sup>Abrek" uttered before him, thus signifying his supremacy over the whole land of Egypt. Thus Joseph left him and went all over the land of Egypt.

During the seven years of plenty the land grew abundant crops, and Joseph amassed corn beyond measure, like the sand of the sea shore. Two sons were born to him before the years<sup>2</sup> of famine came:<sup>3</sup> the eldest he called Manasseh,<sup>4</sup> because God

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<sup>1</sup> A proclamation of honour, whose exact meaning is not certainly known.

<sup>2</sup> MT singular.

<sup>3</sup> MT adds, "whom Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bore."

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, "Forgetfulness."

made him forget all his former troubles, and his home, and the second he called Ephraim,<sup>1</sup> because God had made him fruitful in the land where he had suffered so much. (Afterwards) the famine spread over the whole earth, food being obtainable in Egypt alone.

## 22. HOW JOSEPH'S BROTHERS CAME TO BUY CORN OF HIM.<sup>2</sup>

xlii. 1-xlvii. 12. Jacob found there was corn in Egypt, and said to his sons, "Why do you sit and look at one another?" So ten of Joseph's brothers went down into Egypt to buy corn, for Jacob would not let Joseph's full brother, Benjamin, go with the rest. Joseph himself, now the Prime Minister of the country, was the person who superintended the sale of the corn to all the people of the country, so it was before him that his brothers prostrated themselves with their faces to the ground. He recognised them, but they did not recognise him. Then he remembered the old dream he had once had about them, and said, "You are spies!"

"No! we are honest men, we are no spies. We are twelve in all, brothers on the father's side. Our home is in Canaan, and the youngest of us is there with his father, whilst one is dead."

"No!" Joseph said to them. "It is as I said to you. You are spies. Here is a test for you; by the life of Pharaoh, I swear that you shall not leave the country unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of yourselves to bring your brother, while the rest remain here in prison. Then we shall find out whether you are speaking the truth or not. But—by Pharaoh's life!—you are spies!" Then he shut them up in prison for three days, and at the end of that time Joseph said to them, "I fear God, so I will allow you to do this to save your lives. If you are honest, one of your brothers shall stay in prison, while the rest of you go back with corn enough to satisfy the needs of your family. Then bring your youngest brother to me, that the truth of your words may be proved, to save your lives."

To this they agreed, and said one to another, "Now we must admit our guilt towards our brother. It is because we would not listen when we saw his distress as he pleaded

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, "Fruitfulness."

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 45ff., 95.

with us for mercy that this distress has come upon us." And Reuben said, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? You would not listen to me, and now we shall have to pay for his death." So they talked, not knowing that Joseph was listening to them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. But, after listening to them, he turned away to weep, and when he came back, spoke to them and took Simeon from them, letting them see him imprison him. Joseph gave orders that their sacks should be filled with corn, each man's money being placed in his sack, and that they should be given provisions for the journey. This was done; they loaded their asses with their sacks, and went away, looking at one another in terror, and asking what this was that God had done to them.

On reaching Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all their adventures. "The lord of the country," they said, "spoke harshly to us, treating us as spies. We told him we were honest men, and not spies; that there were twelve of us, brothers on the father's side, that one of us was dead and the youngest was still with our father in the land of Canaan. Then the lord of the country told us that he would test us as to whether we were honest men by making us leave one of us with him and bringing away enough food<sup>1</sup> to meet the needs of our family, till we could take our youngest brother to him. Then having proved that we were honest men and not spies, he would restore our brother to us and give us free leave to trade in the country."

When the time came for them to empty their sacks, each of them found his money in a bundle in his sack. They and their father were terrified when they saw the bundles of money, and Jacob said to them, "It is I whom you have bereaved. Joseph is gone, Simeon is gone, and now you are going to take Benjamin from me. It is on me that all this falls." Reuben said to him, "You may kill my two children if I do not bring him home to you. Put him in my charge, and I will see that he returns." (So Jacob said as they were starting back) "May God grant that the man will be kind to you, and give you both your other brother and Benjamin!"

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT omits.

(So when they came to Joseph, and when he saw Benjamin,) he brought Simeon out to them. And when he had them alone, he made himself known to his brothers. Joseph said, "I am Joseph; is my father living?" So terrified were his brothers that they could not answer till he said, "Come nearer to me." When they did so (he went on), "Do not let it trouble you, for it was to save life that God sent me in front of you. Two years has the famine lasted in the land, and for five years to come there will be no ploughing and no reaping. So God sent me before you to save many lives amongst you. After all, it was not you, but God who sent me here, and made me a father to Pharaoh, a lord to all his family and a ruler to all the country of Egypt. Hurry back to my father, and give him this message from his son Joseph, 'God has made me master of all Egypt; come down to me and live near me, where I myself can care for you. There are still five years of famine to come, and there is a danger that you may be impoverished, together with your family and all who belong to you.' You and my brother Benjamin can see with your own eyes that it is I myself who am speaking to you." Then after he had kissed his brothers and wept over them, they all talked freely together.

The news of the arrival of Joseph's brothers was brought to Pharaoh, to his satisfaction and that of his court. He said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers to harness their animals and go back to the land of Canaan and bring their father and their families to me, that I may give them the best of the land of Egypt. Do<sup>1</sup> you yourself tell them<sup>1</sup> to take from Egypt waggons for their little ones and women, and bring their father with them. Do not let them trouble about their goods, for the best of Egypt is theirs." The sons of Israel obeyed, and Joseph gave them waggons at Pharaoh's orders, and provisions for the journey. Further he gave a suit of clothing to each of them except Benjamin, to whom he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five suits of clothing. To his father he sent ten asses laden with Egyptian produce, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and food for the journey. Then he sent his brothers away, telling them not to annoy one another on the journey.

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<sup>1</sup>.....<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "you yourself have been told."

Leaving Egypt, they came to Canaan, to their father Jacob. But when they told him Joseph was still alive, and was now the master of all Egypt, his mind was too numbed to believe them. When, however, they told him all that Joseph had said to them, and saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to bring him, he recovered.

On reaching Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. There God spoke to him in a vision of the night, calling, "Jacob! Jacob!" When he answered, he said, "I am the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go to Egypt, for there I will make your descendants into a great nation. I will come down with you—yes, and bring you up again, and Joseph shall close your eyes." Then Jacob travelled on from Beersheba (to Egypt). Thereafter Joseph maintained his father, his brothers and all their families with food sufficient for all their little ones.

### 23. JACOB'S LAST HOURS.<sup>1</sup>

xlvi. 1-22. After some time, news was brought to Joseph that his father was sick. Taking his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him, he told Jacob he had come to see him.<sup>2</sup>

When Jacob<sup>3</sup> saw Joseph's sons, he asked who they were. Joseph replied, "They are the sons whom God has given me here." He then brought them up to Jacob, who kissed and embraced them, saying to Joseph, "I never even expected to see you again, and now God has allowed me to see your children as well." Then Joseph brought them from between his knees, and they bowed to the ground.

Jacob gave Joseph the following blessing: "May the God before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, walked, the God who has been my shepherd from my youth until to-day, the angel who has kept me from all harm—may he bless the lads, that my name and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, may be known through them, that they may grow and become great in the earth." (Of the children he said) "Israel shall use their

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 44ff., 95f.

<sup>2</sup> MT inserts (from some other ancient source?) "As I came from Paddan, Rachel died on the journey, some distance from Ephratah, and I buried her on the road to Ephratah, i.e., Bethlehem."

<sup>3</sup> MT "Israel."

name in blessing, saying, "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh," so putting Ephraim before Manasseh.

To Joseph he said, "I am dying, but God will bring you back to the land of your fathers. I give you Shechem before your brothers, for I took it from the Amorites with my sword and bow."

## 24. HOW JOSEPH FORGAVE HIS BROTHERS.

l. 3, 15-21. (When Jacob died) the Egyptians mourned for him for seventy days. At the close of this time, Joseph's brothers, realising that their father was now dead, were afraid Joseph might repay them for the harm they had done him. They told Joseph that, before he died, their father had told them to say to him, "Forgive the sin which your brothers committed in inflicting evil on you." So they begged him to forgive them, for they too were servants of the God of their father. Joseph wept on hearing them. Then they came and fell down before him, offering to become his slaves. But Joseph said to them, "You have nothing to fear. I am not in God's place. You thought you were doing me harm; God accounted it good, so as to save the lives of many people, as he has done to-day. Now have no fear, for I will maintain you and your little ones." With these kind words he comforted them.

## 25. HOW JOSEPH DIED.

l. 22-26. So Joseph and his family lived in Egypt. He lived to see the third generation of Ephraim's children, and on his knees were born the children of Machir the son of Manasseh. At last one day he said to his family, "I am dying. One day God will visit you, and will take you out of this country into that which he promised with an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Then he made the sons of Israel swear, "When God visits you, see to it that you take up my bones with you from here." So on Joseph's death, at the age of a hundred and ten years, they embalmed his body, and placed it in a coffin in Egypt.

# *THE STORY OF THE BEGINNING OF THINGS AS TOLD BY THE JEWISH PRIESTS.*

## I. THE GENEALOGY OF THE UNIVERSE AT ITS CREATION.<sup>1</sup>

i. i-ii. 4. When, in the very beginning, God created the material universe, it was utter chaos, with darkness over the ocean and the breath of God hovering over the water. First, then, God ordered light to come into existence. He was obeyed and found it satisfactory. Next he separated the light from the darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night. So evening came, and morning, a single day.

Next God ordered a solid surface to come into being in the middle of the water, to separate parts of it from one another,<sup>2</sup>and was obeyed.<sup>2</sup> After making the solid surface, he separated the water below it from the water above it, <sup>3</sup>and found it satisfactory. And he called the solid surface sky. So evening came, and morning, a second day.

Next God ordered the water below the sky to collect into a single mass,<sup>4</sup> that dry matter might be visible, and he was obeyed, the water below the sky collecting into its mass and the dry matter becoming visible. He found it satisfactory, and called the dry matter earth and the collected mass of water sea.

Next God ordered the earth to grow green over its whole surface with seed-bearing plants and various kinds of trees which produce fruit containing seed, and he was obeyed. For the earth sent out various kinds of green seed-bearing plants and various kinds of trees which produce fruit containing seed. He found them satisfactory. So evening came, and morning, a third day.

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<sup>1</sup> MT has the title at the end of the section, in ii. 4. For the narrative compare pp. 9f.

<sup>2</sup>.....<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT has the words after "above it."

<sup>3</sup> MT omits; LXX has the words after "sky."

<sup>4</sup> So LXX; MT has "place."



Next God ordered radiant bodies to come into being in the solid surface of the sky, separating day from night and indicating festivals and days and years, and to be radiant in the solid surface of the sky and to give light on the earth, and was obeyed. For God made the two large radiant bodies, the larger one to dominate the day and the smaller one to dominate the night—also the stars, putting them in the solid surface of the sky to shed light over the earth, and dominating day and night and separating light from darkness. He found them satisfactory. So evening came, and morning, a fourth day.

Next God ordered the water to swarm with living reptiles, and birds to fly above the earth under the solid surface of the sky, <sup>1</sup>and he was obeyed.<sup>1</sup> So God created all the great sea-monsters, and all the various kinds of living reptiles with which the water swarms, and all the various kinds of winged birds. He found them satisfactory, and blessed them with the words, “Reproduce yourselves and be many and fill the water in the sea, and let the birds be many on the earth.” So evening came, and morning, a fifth day.

Next God ordered the earth to produce various kinds of living animals, cattle and reptiles and wild beasts of different kinds, and he was obeyed. Thus God made different kinds of land animals, different kinds of cattle and different kinds of land reptiles, and found them satisfactory.

Finally God said, “Let us make man, of the same shape and form as we are, to be master of the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and the cattle and all the land animals<sup>2</sup> and all the reptiles on earth.” So God created Man, giving him exactly his own shape and form, and creating the two sexes. And God blessed them with the words, “Reproduce yourselves in numbers large enough to fill the earth and subdue it, and be masters over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky,<sup>3</sup> and over the cattle<sup>3</sup> and all the land animals and all the land reptiles.” Then God told them he had arranged for them to eat all seed-bearing plants over the whole earth, and all trees with seed-bearing fruit. And the food of all the land animals and the birds in the sky and all the land reptiles—indeed of all living things—was to be

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT omits.

<sup>2</sup> MT omits.

<sup>3</sup>.....<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT omits.



all the foliage of the plants, and he was obeyed. Now God found all his work satisfactory. So evening came, and morning, a sixth day.

So the universe in all its details was completed, and God finished all his constructive work on the seventh day, and on that day ceased all constructive work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he ceased from all his creative labours.

## 2. THE GENEALOGY OF MAN.

v. 1-32. When God created Man, making him in exactly the same form as Himself, in two sexes, he blessed them and gave them the name of Man when they were created. And after living a hundred and thirty years the man had born to him a son<sup>1</sup> exactly like himself, and called him Seth. He lived after the birth of Seth eight hundred years, having other sons and daughters, making a total of nine hundred and thirty years before he died. After living a hundred and five years, Seth had Enosh born to him, and lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred and seven years, having other sons and daughters, making a total of nine hundred and twelve years before he died. After living ninety years, Enosh had Cainan born to him, and lived after the birth of Cainan, having other sons and daughters, for eight hundred and fifteen years, making a total of nine hundred and five years before Enosh died. After living seventy years Cainan had Mehalaleel born to him, and lived after the birth of Mehalaleel, having other sons and daughters, eight hundred and forty years, making a total of nine hundred and ten years before he died. After living sixty-five years, Mehalaleel had Jered born to him, and after the birth of Jered, having other sons and daughters, he lived for eight hundred and thirty years, making a total of eight hundred and ninety-five years before he died. When Jered had lived a hundred and sixty-two years, Enoch was born to him, and after the birth of Enoch, having other sons and daughters, he lived for eight hundred years, making a total of nine hundred and sixty-two years before he died. When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, Methuselah was born to him. Now Enoch was a constant companion of God, and after the birth of Methuselah, having other sons and daughters, he lived three

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<sup>1</sup> MT omits.

hundred years, making a total of three hundred and sixty-five years. Now Enóch was a constant companion of God, and he disappeared—God took him. When Methuselah had lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, Lamech was born to him, and after the birth of Lamech, having other sons and daughters, he lived for seven hundred and eighty-two years, making a total of nine hundred and sixty-nine years before he died. When Lamech had lived a hundred and eighty-two years (Noah) was born to him. After the birth of Noah he had other sons and daughters and lived five hundred and ninety-five years, making a total of seven hundred and seventy-seven years before he died. When Noah had lived five hundred years, Shem, Ham and Japheth were born to him.

### 3 THE GENEALOGY OF NOAH.<sup>1</sup>

vi. 9-ix. 29. Throughout his life, Noah was absolutely just, and was a constant companion of God. He had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. From God's point of view the world had grown utterly corrupt, for it was full of crime. God realised how corrupt it was, and that the morality of the whole race had decayed, and he told Noah that in view of the mass of crime due to humanity, he would destroy the whole race. "So," he said, "make yourself an ark of gopher wood, divided into compartments, and cover it inside and outside with tar. Its dimensions shall be 450 feet in length, 150 feet in breadth and 45 feet in height. Make a window in the top of the ark, as much as a foot and a half in size, and put a door in the side. There shall be lower, second and third decks. Then I will bring the flood on the earth, destroying every living thing below the sky; everything on earth will die. But with you I will make an agreement; you shall go into the ark with your sons and your wife and your sons' wives. Further, you shall take into the ark to save them a pair—both sexes—of every living thing, different kinds of birds, different kinds of animals, different kinds of reptiles; a pair of each shall come to you for preservation. Take also stores of all kinds of edible food for you and them to eat." So Noah did exactly what God had ordered him.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came on the earth, and he went into the ark to escape from the flood, with

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 14f.

his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. Pairs of animals, both those which are ceremonially clean and those which are ceremonially unclean, also of birds and reptiles, went into the ark to Noah, both sexes going as God had ordered him.

Seven days later the flood was over the earth. For on the seventh day of the second month of Noah's six hundredth year, all the fountains of the great ocean broke open, and windows were opened in the sky. On that very day Noah went into the ark with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives, also all the various kinds of animals, cattle, reptiles and birds. In fact, pairs of all living things came to Noah in the ark, all being of both sexes, as God had ordered him.

The water rose very rapidly over all the earth, while the ark floated on its surface. Indeed, it rose so enormously all over the world that the tops of all the highest mountains below the sky were covered, and covered to a depth of twenty-two feet. Consequently every living thing on earth perished—cattle, birds, animals, insects, all the human race, the water retaining its mastery over the world for a hundred and fifty days.

God, however, did not forget Noah and all the animals and cattle he had with him in the ark, and he sent<sup>1</sup> a wind over the earth. At the same time the water began to go down, for the fountains of the great ocean and the windows of the sky were shut. It was after a hundred and fifty days that the water began to fall, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark grounded on the mountains of Ararat. The water continued to fall steadily till the tenth month, and on the first day of that month the mountain-tops became visible. On the first day of the first month of the six hundred and first year of Noah's life the waters began to dry up, and on the twenty-seventh day of the second month the ground was dry.

Then God ordered Noah to come out of the ark with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives, and to bring with him all the animals, birds, cattle, and reptiles and let them breed freely and increase in numbers all over the earth. So Noah came out of the ark with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives and all the animals of different kinds—cattle,<sup>1</sup> birds and reptiles. God blessed Noah and his sons in the following words :  
“Reproduce yourselves ; grow in numbers, and fill the world.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT omits.

Fear and terror of you shall fall upon all the wild animals and on every land reptile and all the fish of the sea, for they have been handed over to you. Every living thing shall become your food ; I will make no difference in this respect between them and the vegetable world, with this restriction, that you shall not eat the life-blood with the flesh. Further, I will hold every animal responsible for your life-blood—and man, too ; yes, I will hold men responsible for one another's lives. Whoever sheds human blood shall have his blood shed by man, for I made man in the exact shape of God. But do you reproduce yourselves, grow in numbers, fill the earth and <sup>1</sup>be its masters.<sup>1</sup>”

God said to Noah and his sons, “ I will make this promise to you and to your descendants, and to all living things that are with you—birds, cattle and wild animals—all that come out of the ark. I will confirm this promise to you, that never again shall all living things be destroyed by a flood, and never again shall the earth be so ruined ; and this,” said God, “ shall be the evidence of the agreement I have made with you and all the animals for ever. I am putting my bow in the clouds, and it shall be evidence between me and the world. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth, then the bow shall be visible in them, and I will remember the agreement I have made with you and with all the animals and with all other living things, so that no flood shall ever again destroy them all.

“ When the bow is in the cloud, then I will see it and remember this perpetual agreement between God and the animals and every living thing on earth. This is the evidence of the agreement which I am making with every living thing in the world.”

After the flood Noah lived another three hundred and fifty years, making a total of nine hundred and fifty years before he died.

#### 4. THE GENEALOGY OF NOAH'S SONS.<sup>2</sup>

x. 1-32. The children of Shem, Ham and Japheth were not born till after the flood. The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Tubal and Meshek and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, the Kitians and the

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<sup>1</sup>.....<sup>1</sup> M'T has “ be many.”

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 15f.

Dedanians. It was from these with their various languages tribes and nations that the Foreign Islands were populated country by country. .

The sons of Ham were Cush and Egypt and Put and Canaan. The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabtakah. And the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. These were the descendants of Ham in their various tribes, languages, lands and nations.

The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arphaxad and Aram. And the sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Mash, and Arphaxad was the father of Shelah and Shelah of Eber. These are the various descendants of Shem with their different tribes, languages, lands and nationalities. And all the preceding are the descendants of Noah, with their genealogies in their different nationalities, by whom the nations of the world were populated after the flood.

## 5. THE GENEALOGY OF SHEM.

xi. 10-26. At the age of a hundred years, Shem had Arphaxad born to him, two years after the flood. After the birth of Arphaxad, having other sons and daughters, he lived five hundred years, making a total of six hundred years before he died. When Arphaxad had lived thirty-five years Shelah was born to him. After the birth of Shelah he lived four hundred and three years, having other sons and daughters, making a total of four hundred and thirty-eight years before he died. When Shelah had lived thirty years, Eber was born to him, and after the birth of Eber, having other sons and daughters, he lived four hundred and three years, making a total of four hundred and thirty-three years before he died. When Eber had lived thirty-four years, Peleg was born to him, and after the birth of Peleg, having other sons and daughters, he lived four hundred and thirty years, making a total of four hundred and sixty-four years before he died. When Peleg had lived thirty years, Reu was born to him, and after the birth of Reu, having other sons and daughters, he lived two hundred and nine years, making a total of two hundred and thirty-nine years before he died. When Reu had lived thirty-two years, Serug was born to him, and after the birth of Serug, having

other sons and daughters, he lived two hundred and seven years, making a total of two hundred and thirty-seven years. When Serug had lived thirty years, Nahor was born to him, and after the birth of Nahor, having other sons and daughters, he lived two hundred years, making a total of two hundred and thirty years before he died. When Nahor had lived twenty-nine years Terah was born to him, and after the birth of Terah, having other sons and daughters, he lived a hundred and nineteen years, making a total of a hundred and forty-eight years before he died. And when Terah had lived seventy years, Abram, Nahor and Haran were born to him.

## 6. THE GENEALOGY OF TERAH.<sup>1</sup>

xi. 27- xxv. 11. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran, and Haran was the father of Lot. And Terah took Abram his son and Lot his grandson, the son of Haran, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they left the Chaldean city of Ur, to emigrate to Canaan. When they reached Haran they remained there, and when Terah was two hundred and five years old, he died, still in Haran. (xii. 4) When Abram was seventy-five years of age, he left Haran, taking with him Sarai his wife, Lot his nephew, and all the property he had amassed and all the persons he had acquired in Haran, emigrating to the land of Canaan. (xiii. 6) When, however, they reached their destination, they found that the resources of the land were too slender to allow them to keep together, so large was their property. They therefore separated, Abram remaining in Canaan, and Lot taking up his residence in the cities on the Plain.

(xvi. 1) Sarai, Abram's wife, had hitherto been childless, so after Abram had been ten years in the land of Canaan, she took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband in marriage. (xvi. 15) She became the mother of a son, and Abram, who was now eighty-six years of age, gave to the son of Hagar and himself the name Ishmael.

(xvii. 1) When Abram was ninety-nine years of age, Yahweh appeared to him and said to him, "I am El Shaddai; see that your conduct is blameless in my sight. If it is, I will make a formal agreement with you, and your descendants shall increase

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 17, 19f.



enormously in numbers.” Thereupon Abram bowed till his face-touched the ground, and God continued, “In accordance with the agreement I am setting before you, you shall become the ancestor of many nations. In token thereof your name shall be changed from Abram to Abraham, because I am making you the ancestor of many nations. For your descendants shall be so numerous that I will make them into many nations, and they shall include kings. This present agreement shall be valid for you and your descendants, generation after generation in perpetuity, and I will become the God of yourself and of all your successors after you. All Canaan, the land in which you are travelling as a visitor, I will give you as your own property, for yourself and for your descendants in perpetuity, and I will become your God.” Further, God said to Abraham, “You and all your descendants after you must keep the condition on which I grant this agreement. This is the condition which must be kept by you and your descendants after you : *All your males must be circumcised*, circumcised in your foreskin, thus testifying to the covenant which has been made between me and you. Every male child amongst your people for ever must be circumcised on the eighth day after birth, including the slave who is born in your family and the slave whom you purchase from foreigners who is not of your race. The home-born slave and the purchased slave must be circumcised, so that the agreement may be stamped upon your bodies for ever. If there is a male who has not been circumcised in the foreskin, that person must be expelled from his people on the ground that he has broken my agreement.”

God further said to Abraham, “For the future your wife’s name shall be changed from Sarai to Sarah. I will so bless her that she herself shall bring you a son, and shall become the ancestress of many nations.” And Abraham fell forward, with his face to the ground, laughing at the idea that a man a hundred years of age, and Sarah, now ninety, should have a son born to them. So he said to God, “May your protection preserve the life of Ishmael !” But God said, “It is not of him that I speak ; it is Sarah your wife who is to bring you a son, to whom you are to give the name of Isaac,<sup>1</sup> and it is with him and his

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, “laughter.”

descendants after him that I will ratify the agreement I make—an agreement in perpetuity. As for Ishmael, I will do what you have asked, and I will make his descendants very very numerous. His sons shall include twelve princes ruling over a great nation. But it is with Isaac, who shall be born to Sarah a year hence, that I will ratify the agreement I have made.” With these last words, God left Abraham.

Without a single day’s delay, Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves who had been born in his household and all those whom he had bought—in fact, every male in his household—and, in obedience to God’s command, he circumcised them in the foreskin. Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Ishmael thirteen when they were circumcised in the foreskin. On that very same day were circumcised both Abraham and his son Ishmael, together with all the men born as slaves in his household and all the slaves he had bought from foreigners.

(xix. 29) When God destroyed the cities of the Plain, he did not forget Abraham, but sent Lot safely out of the ruin which he brought on the cities where Lot lived.

(xxi. 1) God<sup>1</sup> did for Sarah what he had promised at the time that he had indicated. And Abraham gave the name of Isaac to the son who was born to him and to Sarah. In accordance with God’s command, Abraham circumcised his new-born son, Isaac, when he was eight days old, he himself being a hundred years old at the time of Isaac’s birth.

(xxiii. 1) Sarah lived altogether a hundred and twenty-seven years, and died at Kiriath Arba, *i.e.*, Hebron, in the land of Canaan. And Abraham went in to mourn for her with tears. Then he left the corpse and went to speak to the Hittites. He reminded them that he was only a foreigner and had no standing amongst them, but asked that they should grant him a grave amongst them where he might bury the corpse. They replied: “Listen, sir, you are a heaven-sent prince amongst us; bury the corpse in the best of our graves; there is not one of us who would withhold a grave from you, and so prevent you from burying your dead.” Rising from his seat, and bowing low,

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<sup>1</sup> MT “Yahweh.”



Abraham replied to the Hittites, "If it is indeed your pleasure that I should bury the corpse of my dead, so that I may see it no more, then I beg that you will approach Ephron, son of Zohar, and ask him to grant me the Cave of Macpelah, at the extremity of his property. I am prepared to offer its full value in money if he will allow me to have it as my own grave in your midst." Now Ephron the Hittite was sitting amongst the rest, and he replied in the hearing of all the Hittites who had come in to the city gate, "Not so, sir; permit me to give you the field as a present, together with the cave which it contains. In the presence of these my fellow-countrymen I have bestowed them on you, that you may bury the corpse." Once more Abraham bowed to the citizens present, saying to Ephron so that all the citizens could hear, "No, I beg of you, let me give you money for the field; please accept it from me, that I may bury the corpse there." Thereupon Ephron replied to Abraham, "The land is only worth four hundred shekels of silver—a mere trifle between us; bury the corpse there." To this Abraham agreed, and counted out the sum mentioned in the presence of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver of commercial standard.

In this way the field of Ephron at Macpelah, near Mamre, the field together with the cave in it and all the trees within its boundaries on every side, passed legally into the possession of Abraham, as was witnessed by the Hittites, that is by all who passed in to the gate of the city. And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah, in the cave in the field of Macpelah near Mamre, *i.e.* Hebron, in the land of Canaan. Thus the field and the cave in it passed legally into the possession of Abraham from the Hittites, for use as a burying-place.

(xxv. 7) The total length of Abraham's life was a hundred and seventy-five years. He died after a long life, having spent his declining years in happiness before he joined the great majority. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Macpelah in the field of Ephron, son of Zohar, the Hittite, near Mamre. Both Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried in the ground which he had bought from the Hittites. And after the death of Abraham, God sent prosperity on Isaac his son.

## 7. THE GENEALOGY OF ISHMAEL, THE SON OF ABRAHAM AND HAGAR, SARAH'S SLAVE.

xxv. 12-17. The following are the names of the sons of Ishmael, names borne both by themselves and their descendants : Nebaioth—Ishmael's eldest son—Kedar, Adbeel, Mishma, Duma, Massa, Hadad, Toma, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedmah. These are the names of the sons of Ishmael by their villages and their encampments—twelve princes over their tribes. After a life of a hundred and thirty-seven years, Ishmael failed and died, and so joined the great majority.

## 8. THE GENEALOGY OF ISAAC, THE SON OF ABRAHAM.<sup>1</sup>

xxv. 19-xxxv. 29. Isaac was the son of Abraham, and when he was forty years of age he married Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean, and the sister of Laban the Aramean, of Paddan Aram. (xxv. 26) (Esau and Jacob) were born to them when Isaac was sixty years old. (xxvi. 34) At the age of forty Esau married Judith, the daughter of Beerli the Hittite and Basmath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, which terribly distressed Isaac and Rebecca.

(xxvii. 46) Eventually Rebecca told Isaac that she was sick to death of these Hittite women, and if Jacob married a Hittite woman of the country like them, her own life would not be worth living. So Isaac summoned Jacob, and, giving him his blessing, strictly forbade him to marry a Canaanite woman. "Up!" said he, "and go to Paddan Aram, where your uncle Laban lives, and marry one of his daughters. May El Shaddai bless you, giving you many children, and so many descendants that they may become a number of nations. May he also give you and your descendants the blessing which he gave Abraham, so that you may some day possess the land where you now travel as a visitor, the land he promised Abraham." So Isaac sent Jacob away to go to Paddan Aram, to see Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebecca, and uncle of Jacob and Esau. When Esau realised that Isaac had sent Jacob with his blessing to Paddan Aram for a wife of that country, and with his blessing had strictly forbidden him to marry a

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<sup>1</sup> Compare pp. 31ff., 61ff.

woman of Canaan, and that Jacob had obeyed his parents and had gone to Paddan Aram, and that they disliked Canaanite women, then he went to Ishmael and married Mahlah the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, and sister of Nebaioth, in addition to the wives he had already.

(When Jacob reached Paddan Aram, Laban gave him his daughter Leah in marriage), (xxix. 24) and gave Leah his daughter his slave Zilpah to be her slave. (xxix. 28) He also gave him his daughter Rachel in marriage, and gave her his slave Bilhah as a slave, and Rachel allowed Jacob to marry Bilhah her slave, (xxx. 9) and Leah also allowed Jacob to marry Zilpah her slave. (xxx. 22) But God did not forget Rachel.

(xxxi. 18) (Then Jacob collected) all the property in flocks and herds he had acquired in Paddan Aram, and started to return to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan, (xxxiii. 18) in his journey reaching the city of Shechem safely.

(xxxv. 6) When Jacob reached Luz in the land of Canaan, (xxxv. 9) as he came from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him to bless him. He told him that his name, which had hitherto been Jacob, should be changed to Israel, so he was afterwards called Israel. Further, God said, "I am El Shaddai; you shall have children so numerous that they shall be a nation, or rather a commonwealth of nations. You shall have kings amongst your descendants, and I will give you and your descendants the land which I pledged to Abraham and Isaac." God then left him,<sup>1</sup> and Jacob gave the name of Bethel to the place where God had spoken to him.

(xxxv. 22) Jacob had twelve sons :—

(a) Sons of Leah :

Reuben, Jacob's eldest son.  
Simeon,  
Levi,  
Judah,  
Issachar,  
Zebulun.

(b) Sons of Rachel :

Joseph,  
Benjamin.

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<sup>1</sup> MT adds : " the place where he had spoken to him."

(c) Sons of Bilhah, Rachel's slave :

Dan,  
Naphtali.

(d) Sons of Zilpah, Leah's slave :

Gad,  
Asher.

The above sons of Jacob were born in Paddan Aram, before Jacob returned to his father Isaac at Mamre—also called Kiriath Arba, or Hebron—in the land of Canaan, the place visited by Abraham and Isaac. The whole length of Isaac's life was a hundred and eighty years. Then he failed and died and joined the great majority, at an extreme old age, being buried by his sons Esau and Jacob in the tomb which Abraham had bought.

## 9. THE GENEALOGY OF ESAU, *i.e.* EDM.

xxxvi. 1-9. Esau married a Canaanite woman, Ada, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, son<sup>1</sup> of Zibeon the Horite,<sup>2</sup> and Basmath, daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nebaioth. Whilst he still lived in the land of Canaan, Esau had born to him, by Ada, Eliphaz, by Basmath, Reuel, and by Oholibamah, Jeush, Jalam and Korah. Later, Esau, with his wives, his sons, his daughters, all his household, his flocks, his cattle and all the property he had acquired in the land of Canaan, migrated to the land of Seir,<sup>3</sup> to make room for his brother Jacob. For their property was too large to allow of their living together, and the country over which they wandered could not support them because of the size of their flocks. So Esau, *i.e.*, Edom, made his home in Mount Seir. This is the genealogy of Esau, the ancestor of Edom in Mount Seir.

## 10. THE NAMES OF THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU.

xxxvi. 10-14. Eliphaz was the son of Ada and Esau ; Reuel was the son of Basmath and Esau. The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz. He also had a

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT " daughter."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT Hivite."

<sup>3</sup> MT omits.

secondary wife named Timnah, who was the mother of Amalek. So far the descendants of Esau and Ada.

The sons of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. So far the sons of Basmath and Esau.

The sons of Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, son of Zibeon, and Esau were Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

## 11. THE CHIEFTAINS OF THE ESAUITES.

xxxvi. 15-19. (a) Sons of Eliphaz, Esau's eldest son :

The chieftains Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, Korah, Gatam, Amalek. These were the chieftains of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. So far the descendants of Ada.

(b) Sons of Reuel, son of Esau :

The chieftains of Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, Mizzah. These were the chieftains of Reuel in the land of Edom. So far the descendants of Basmath and Esau.

(c) Sons of Olohibamah, the wife of Esau :

The chieftains of Jeush, Jalam, Korah. These were the chieftains of Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, wife of Esau.

So far the sons of Esau, *i.e.*, Edom, and their chieftains.

## 12. THE DESCENDANTS OF SEIR THE HORITE—ABORIGINES.

xxxvi. 20-30. The chieftains of the Horites who were descended from Seir in the land of Edom, were Lotan, Shobal, Ziphon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam, and his sister Timnah. The sons of Shobal were Alwan, Mahanath, Ebal, Shepo and Onam. The sons of Zibeon were Ajjah and Anah, who found water in the desert while he was feeding the asses of his father Zibeon. The children of Anah were Dishon and Oholibamah. The sons of Dishon were Hendah, Eshban, Jithron and Keran. The sons of Ezer were Bilhan, Zawan and Ekan. The sons of Dishan were Uz and Aran.

The chieftains who ruled over the Horites in the land of Edom, were those of Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. So far the chieftains of the Horites, named according to their families<sup>1</sup> in the land of Seir.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT "Chieftains."

### 13. THE NAMES OF THE CHIEFTAINS OF ESAU, MENTIONED BY THEIR TRIBES AND LOCALITIES.

xxxvi. 40-xxxvii. 1. The chieftains of Timnah, Alwah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel and Iram. These are the chieftains of Edom, together with the territories which they owned.

All this time Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, through which his father had wandered as a stranger.<sup>1</sup>

### 14. THE GENEALOGY OF JACOB.

xxxvii. 2-l. 13 At the age of seventeen Joseph was a herdsman of his father's flock.

(xli. 46). At the age of thirty, Joseph was in high office at the court of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. (xlvi. 6). So Jacob, with all his descendants, sons, grandsons, granddaughters, and all the cattle and property they had acquired in Canaan, migrated to Egypt.

The descendants of Israel, who migrated to Egypt, were as follows :—

(a) Reuben, Jacob's eldest son. His sons were Henoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

(b) The sons of Simeon : Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Saul, whose mother was a Canaanite woman.

(c) The sons of Levi : Gershom, Kohath and Merari.

(d) The sons of Judah : Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah, of whom Er and Onan died in Canaan, and Perez had sons named Hezron and Hamul.

(e) The sons of Issachar : Tola, Puwwah, Job and Shimron.

(f) The sons of Zebulun : Sered, Elon and Jahleel.

The above were all sons of Leah, and were born in Paddan Aram, together with Jacob's daughter Dinah, making a total, including both sexes, of thirty-three persons.

(g) The sons of Gad : Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

(h) The sons of Asher : Jimnah, Jishwi, and Beriah, with their sister Serah. Beriah had two sons, Heber and Malkiel.

The above were all the children of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah, making a total of sixteen persons.

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<sup>1</sup> MT adds "that is Esau, the father of Edom."

Rachel, the wife of Jacob, had two sons

(i) Joseph,

(j) Benjamin.

Joseph and Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the Priest of On, had two sons born to them in Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim.

The sons of Benjamin were Bela, Beker, Asbel, Gera, Naaman, Ahiram, Shupham, Hupham and Ard.

These were all the children of Rachel and Jacob, making a total of fourteen persons.

(k) The son of Dan was Hushim.

(l) The sons of Naphtali : Jahzeel, Guni, Jezr and Shillem.

These were all the children of Jacob and Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, making a total of seven persons.

So when Jacob came down to Egypt, his direct descendants who came with him, not including the wives of his sons, numbered sixty-six persons in all. To these must be added the two sons who were born to Joseph in Egypt, making the total of the family seventy persons when they entered Egypt.

xlvi. 5. <sup>1</sup>When the news reached Pharaoh's court, he said to Joseph, <sup>1</sup> "Now that your father and brothers have joined you, you can choose any portion of the land of Egypt and settle them in the best part of the country." Then Joseph brought his father and presented him to the king, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh asked Jacob his age, and he replied, "I have wandered but a hundred and thirty years; short and sorrowful has been the time of my wandering, and I have not reached the age of my ancestors," and before Jacob left Pharaoh he blessed him again. So Joseph carried out Pharaoh's instructions and made his father and his brothers a home in the land of Egypt, giving them an estate in the best part of the country, in the district of Rameses. (xlvi. 27) This was how Israel came to settle in the land of Egypt,<sup>2</sup> where they held property and grew rapidly in numbers and in strength.

Jacob himself lived seventeen years in Egypt, making the total length of his life a hundred and forty-seven years. (xlviii. 3) Before his death he said to Joseph, "El Shaddai appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, promising to make

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT omits.

<sup>2</sup> MT Goshen.



my descendants numerous and strong, a company of nations, and to give me and my posterity after me that land as property for ever. I therefore hereby adopt the two sons who were born to you in Egypt before I came, and will give the same treatment to Ephraim and Manasseh as to Reuben and Simeon. But any children who were born to you after them shall be yours, when they come to take their share of the family property, they shall be included under the names of their two elder brothers."

(Then Jacob called his sons together) (xlix. 28) and after giving to each of them a separate blessing, added the following instructions: "I am about to join the great majority; bury me in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite. It is the cave in the field of Macpelah, opposite Mamre in the land of Canaan, which was bought for a family grave by Abraham from Ephron the Hittite. There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebecca, and there I buried Leah." After Jacob had given these instructions he failed and passed over to the great majority. (l. 12) So his sons carried out his wishes by bearing his body to the land of Canaan and burying it in the cave in the field of Macpelah, opposite Mamre, which had been bought for a family grave by Abraham from Ephron the Hittite.



*A Narrative of Uncertain Origin Describing an  
Invasion of Palestine by Four Mesopotamian  
Kings, Contemporary with Abraham.*

CHAPTER XIV.

During the reign of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goyim, an expedition was made by them against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemebed<sup>1</sup> king of Zeboim and the king of Bela or Zoar, who had formed confederation in the valley of Shiddim, *i.e.*, the Dead Sea. These five had for twelve years acknowledged the supremacy of Chedorlaomer, revolting in the thirteenth. A year later, Chedorlaomer and his allies undertook their expedition. In turn they crushed the Rephaim at Ashtoreth Karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emin at Shaveh Kirjathaim, and the Horim, in the hills<sup>2</sup> of Seir, penetrating as far as El Paran on the edge of the desert. Retracing their steps, they reached Ain Mishpat, where they ravaged the Amalekite country and that of the Amorites who inhabited Hazazon Tamar. At this point they were opposed by the five Canaanite kings already mentioned, and a pitched battle was fought between the four kings on the one side and the five on the other. (The Canaanite forces were utterly routed), their flight was impeded by their constant falling into the bitumen wells in which the Valley of Shiddim abounds, and the remainder made good their escape to the hills. Lot<sup>3</sup> was at the time living at Sodom, and was carried away (by the Mesopotamian kings) together with all the goods and food of Sodom and Gomorrah.

News of these events reached Abram through a fugitive who found him living by the oak of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eschol and Aner, who were his allies at the time. Hearing that his kinsman Lot, was a prisoner, he armed<sup>4</sup> his household slaves,

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<sup>1</sup> MT "Shemeber."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT "in Hararam."

<sup>3</sup> MT adds: "Abraham's nephew."

<sup>4</sup> So LXX (?); MT "emptied."

three hundred and eighteen in number, and followed (the retreating army) as far as Dan. In a surprise assault<sup>1</sup> at night he utterly routed them, and, after pressing the pursuit as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus, recovered the goods and liberated his kinsman Lot, together with the women and the other prisoners.

On his return from his victory over Chedorlaomer and his allies he was formally received by the king of Sodom at the Valley of Shaveh or Kingsdale. Mechizedek, king of Salem, who was a priest of El-Eljon, offered him bread and wine, with the following blessing :

“ Blessings on Abram from El-Eljon,  
Master of sky and of earth ;  
And blessings on El-Eljon,  
Who delivered thy foes to thy grasp.”

Thereupon Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

The king of Sodom said to Abram, “ Give me the persons who have been recovered and keep the goods.”

“ No,” said Abram, “ I have sworn to El-Eljon, master of sky and of earth, that I will not take so much as a thread or boot-lace from your property, that you may have no ground whatever for claiming to have enriched me. All I will accept for myself is the rations of my soldiers, but my allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, shall have their share of the spoil.”

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<sup>1</sup> LXX ; MT “ was divided.”

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—  
NUMBER THREE.

# THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

TRANSLATED INTO COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH BY

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## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE modern translations that exist of parts or of the whole of the Old Testament are, as a rule, too expensive and too scholarly for the ordinary reader. In the case of the New Testament excellent help has been afforded by many recent translators, notably by Dr. Moffatt. In a wide experience among working men and women we have found frequent requests for a simple version of the Old Testament in similar language to that employed in the modern versions of the New Testament. By the generous help of our colleagues in this enterprise we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship.

Whilst the original sections of the book have been kept distinct from one another, no attempt has been made to reproduce the poetic form or language of the Prophet. We trust, nevertheless, that the following pages will help many readers to grasp the message of one of the noblest of the heroes of faith, and to appreciate the personality of one of the greatest figures of all time.

We can now definitely promise a continuance of this series, and further issues will follow shortly. We are grateful for the reception given to "The Books of Amos and Genesis," and have tried to benefit by many helpful criticisms received, for which we are thankful.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed by us.

G.C.M.

T.H.R.





# THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH.

## INTRODUCTION.

JEREMIAH belonged to a priestly family of Anathoth, a village in Benjamin, some three miles north of Jerusalem. Himself of the stock from which Benjamin and Ephraim claimed descent, he sees in the ruin of the North mother Rachel bewailing her children, he remembers Shiloh the original centre of Ephraim's worship, and he refuses to believe that the race which bred Amos and Hosea is a castaway from the grace of God. The priestly clan, settled in Anathoth, was the family of Abiathar which Solomon deposed: the future prophet, therefore, could claim descent from Eli. Such an origin brought its own contribution. On the one hand, Jeremiah, like Luther, Wycliffe and many others, proves how the best reformers of religion generally appear among a period's religious men, who enjoy at least the advantage of knowing something about the subject with which they deal. On the other hand, he was not identified with the interests and prejudices which are apt to blind a professional caste.

Called to the prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah, i.e. 626, he began his work in a time which was big with portent to the world and to the little kingdom of Judah. Assyria had during more than a century dominated everything; in 722 it conquered Samaria, in 670 it overran Egypt, in 648 it put down a rebellion in Babylon; Judah was its vassal, paying tribute. But now, with a suddenness and completeness which have no parallel in history, the mistress of the world collapsed. "In 606, after a terrible siege, Nineveh was taken by storm and the last king of Assyria perished in the holocaust of his palace, his courtiers and his slaves."

The instant question was who should take its place. Egypt had not waited for the final disaster to Nineveh before moving. Pharaoh Necho raised a great army and led it into North Palestine. There at Megiddo, 608, he killed Josiah of Judah, and proceeded to subdue Syria, before pushing on to the Euphrates. At Carchemish, however, which commanded the

river crossing, he was met by Nebuchadrezzar of 'Babylon, who, while Necho was busy in Syria, had been preparing a force ; and here in 604 the Egyptians suffered an utter rout which determined the fate of the world for a time. Babylon was to succeed Nineveh as mistress of the world ; and Judah, from being vassal to Assyria, was to be subject to Babylon.

Josiah had fallen at Megiddo. When his body was brought back to the capital, the people made his son Jehoahaz king. It did not, however, suit the plans of Egypt to have the strong fortress in the rear of its army held by one who might continue the policy of his father. So Necho deposed the new king in favour of his brother, Jehoiakim, who, as nominee of Egypt, would govern in its interests. This was the king who treated Jeremiah so cavalierly, slitting up and burning his prophecies.

With the defeat at Carchemish the prospects of Judah were changed. As, however, Nebuchadrezzar had many and important matters to determine, the little kingdom was probably left alone for a time. The condition of the great power seems to have encouraged Jehoiakim in a bid for independence ; at least he rebelled and was apparently able to maintain himself during his life-time. Nebuchadrezzar, however, when his Empire was settled, marched against Jerusalem ; and in the first captivity, 596, carried away Jehoiachin, son and successor of Jehoiakim, appointing Zedekiah in his place.

Already after Carchemish Nebuchadrezzar had pursued the routed Egyptians to their own borders and had only turned back because of troubles in Babylon. It was to be expected that he should renew his attack. Accordingly Egypt continued to intrigue in Palestine and Syria, fomenting disaffection against the Eastern power. In particular, after Psamtik II succeeded Necho in 594, an attempt seems to have been made to form a league, with Egypt in the background, and efforts were made to win over Zedekiah. To some such scheme Jeremiah's oracle as to the iron yoke, *c.* 28, may refer. Other prophets, notably Hananiah, were urging Zedekiah to join the league. On what grounds they did this it is impossible to tell, and, in the absence of information as to their motives, it is wise to keep steadily in view that we cannot tell. It is much to be regretted that we do not possess the utterances of any of the "false" prophets of the period. To know why they took the attitude

they did would not only be interesting in itself, but might help us to learn the reasons which prompted Jeremiah in the name of Yahweh to set himself resolutely against every effort at resistance to Babylon.

Apparently Babylon heard of the movement and summoned Zedekiah, personally or through representatives, to explain himself. To this embassy we may ascribe c. 29, which contains a letter from Jeremiah to the exiles, meant to quiet the minds of the Jews in Babylonia who, under the influence of two prophets of the type of Hananiah, were cherishing hopes of return linked probably with projects of rebellion. Though, however, the earlier movement came to nothing, Zedekiah was over-persuaded later, for, when Hophra, 589, succeeded Psamtik as Pharaoh, Egyptian intrigues stirred up rebellion in Judah. Evidently Zedekiah counted on Egyptian support, but Egypt was always slow. Nebuchadrezzar, giving his enemy no time, struck at once and struck hard. In 587 Jerusalem was besieged.

To this period belong several incidents reported in our book. One was the freedom given to the debtors who had sold themselves as slaves in the city, c. 34. Apparently the purpose of the decree was to stiffen the resistance of the capital. As soon, however, as the delayed Egyptian army advanced and the report of their approach compelled the Babylonians temporarily to raise the siege, the solemn engagement was departed from and the slavery renewed. Against this cynical conduct Jeremiah uttered his vehement protest.

Another incident is the interesting story of how the king at least once consulted the prophet as to the result of the siege. The leading men, who were resolved on resistance to the last, and who recognised that the prophet's unvarying and unconcealed conviction of the certainty of Nebuchadrezzar's victory could only damp the ardour of the king and the garrison, did their best to silence him, c. 38. It is wise and just to recognise that they had some reason for their attitude.

Throughout the period Jeremiah never swerved from the conviction that the one thing to be done was for Judah to submit to the inevitable, because Yahweh had revealed to him His will that Babylon should rule the world. In particular, during the siege, he not only believed, but steadily declared that the city was doomed. Since Zedekiah, at least once,

inquired privately as to Yahweh's will, it is evident that the king hesitated. It is well not to decide too readily from this that Zedekiah was a mere weakling: he had good reason for hesitation. It is easy to say that, in obedience to Jeremiah's advice, he ought to have surrendered. We do not even know that he would have been allowed, if he had tried. It is possible that his officials, who seem to have followed the "false" prophets, might have deposed him and continued the hopeless struggle. And, since it is not clear why Jeremiah was so sure that the city was doomed, or why the "false" prophets were equally sure that resistance was possible, it is unwise to say that we have sufficient ground for making up our minds. Probably the honour which is due to Jeremiah should not be claimed on the ground of the position he took in a question of politics. Politics is a matter in which, after the lapse of 2,600 years, it is profoundly difficult to decide who was wise and who was unwise.

We should rather rest Jeremiah's claim to greatness on the principles he advocated, which made it possible, however the political game turned out, that religion could continue in Judah, and so could hope to continue in the world. He seems, with Hosea and Amos, to have believed that the State was doomed, i.e., that in the interests of true religion it was better that the Jewish State should go. He seems further to have become convinced that, in the interests of true religion, it was better that the temple should go. Holding these things strongly, he bent his whole energies in the direction of showing that religion was independent of these two outward forms and could continue, even after they had vanished.

In times, however, of grave national peril, when patriotism is alive and men are eagerly maintaining their State with all for which it stands, a man who puts into a secondary position the things which engross his fellow countrymen is sure to be accused of being no patriot. Jeremiah had this fate. It is only the later generation which can see how, in his effort to preserve the soul, he ignored the form. We all stone our prophets, while we build sepulchres over the bodies of the prophets of the past.

What, however, is certain is that Jerusalem fell in 584 and the last and greatest captivity was carried out. When the

city was captured, the Babylonian commander-in-chief, recognising Jeremiah's attitude during the siege, set him at liberty. The favour shown the prophet by the conquerors naturally suggests that the position he had taken had made their work easier, and further suggests that the patriotic leaders had some excuse for their charge that he weakened the courage of the garrison. The fact seems to be that Jeremiah was not primarily interested in the independence, but in the religion, of Judah. The glory of Judah in his eyes did not consist in its being a political, but in its remaining a religious, force. Yet it is we who can most naturally record our gratitude that, to one man at least in that early time, religion seemed more important than success.

Of the fate of the Judean community after the capture of Jerusalem it is unnecessary to write, since the account given in cc. 40-43 is so clear that any account would amount to no more than a useless epitome. It is enough to say that, after Jeremiah was taken to Egypt by the band of frightened men who retired thither, he disappears from history.

While the period was thus one of great political movement, it was no less one of far-reaching religious change ; for it was a time when all devout and serious men felt the need for reform. Already Hezekiah, influenced by Isaiah, had made an effort in this direction, but the movement was brought to nothing through the reaction under Manasseh. The submissive vassal of Assyria, this king was content to copy his liege-lord in religion as well as in politics. He introduced the worship of Eastern deities into his capital, and, to quiet opposition, even resorted to persecution, probably because the prophets, following the example of Elijah, did not submit patiently to the introduction of a foreign worship. Along with the worship of the gods of the conqueror went a weakening in the people's national religion and a slackening of the moral fibre. Hence arose an increase in every form of gross superstition, which had been kept under while the Yahweh faith was vigorous. The political situation helped the religious lapse. The nation lost heart ; it began to take its place, as merely one among the many little nations which cowered, living on sufferance under Nineveh. Crushed by ruinous taxation for payment of tribute, losing its national aspirations, it was in danger of losing its soul. Since

its religion was precisely what gave it its distinctive character among the other nations, its religion was losing ground. On the high places of the country villages there had always been a bastard mixture of the worship of Yahweh and Baal ; and now the Baal elements, which meant at bottom nature worship and lax morality, gained more strength. Many of Jeremiah's early oracles deal with this worship, cc. 2, 3, 13<sup>22ff</sup>, and it is only necessary to read his grave indictment of the practices at these shrines in order to recognise how serious the peril was.

Conscious of the danger, all serious men in Judah saw that something must be done to reform their worship ; and, to meet the need, in 621 the code of Deuteronomy was made the law for the Kingdom. The code was not a wholly new creation, but mainly a collection of the best practice which had grown up at different religious centres. What was new about it was that all this practice was made subservient to and gathered round one central principle, viz., that everything which in origin or use was heathen must be finally purged out of the national worship. Only what agreed with the character of Yahweh, as this had been defined and revealed by the great prophets, must be retained in Judah's worship. All which was tainted with Baalism, shrine or sacrifice or emblem, must be utterly rooted out.

Naturally such an effort at reform had the effect which every effort at reform has ; it set men thinking about principles. Everyone who recognised the terrible need for a reform in faith and morals saw how necessary some such code as Deuteronomy was. But the further question could not be silenced, viz., what was it which Yahweh, as contrasted with Baal, required ? Did Yahweh demand sacrifices like any other god, or was it indifferent to Him whether men sacrificed at all ? If He required them, what did He do with them, after they were given ? Inevitably reform raised broad issues as to Yahweh's nature and demanded clear and reverent thought on what was His will to men. What Jeremiah's attitude to these questions was, what he counted essential and sufficient for his people's worship, what were his views about sacrifice and the temple, and what, in particular, was the attitude he took to the new code, are precisely questions which are still debated among students of his book. It is impossible to enter into these here, since the subject is



involved with many other questions. Yet it deserves attention that, with their adoption of this code and specially through the way in which they interpreted and applied the code, the Jews took one of the most significant and influential steps in their history as a religious community, and that the effects of their attitude are being felt to-day in all our Christian communities. Perhaps it may be lawful to cherish the hope that this new translation may interest some and help others in thinking out these questions for themselves.

A little of a general character needs to be said as to the way in which the oracles in our book came to be collected and as to how the book came into its present form. It is, however, as necessary to insist that whatever is said is very tentative, because the questions are far from determined.

The book then seems to be a collection of prophetic material rather than the work of one mind. Thus chapters 50 and 51 appear to have existed once in an independent form and to show a common source, though that source is certainly not Jeremiah. Again, certain oracles on Edom occur both in this book and in the book of Obadiah, certain others on Moab occur not only here but in the book of Isaiah. The most natural explanation of such phenomena appears to be that these oracles were current in the community with no name attached to them. One collector assigned them to Jeremiah, another to Isaiah, on grounds which we are wholly unable to discover. Whether such a collector was guided by tradition or by internal evidence it is impossible to say. Now, what seems proved as to these few oracles may well be true about others in our book, viz., that they, too, were circulating under no name, and, for reasons which we cannot trace, were ascribed to Jeremiah. As however, we have no *certain* standard by which to test whether any oracle is genuinely Jeremianic, students differ greatly in their view of how much in the book is original.

When, further, we examine the material which deals with Jeremiah, one broad distinction is visible. Thus we have collections of oracles by the prophet, more or less authentic—compare chapters 2-7, 21<sup>11</sup>-23<sup>40</sup>. On the other hand, we have a series of incidents from his life, which sometimes contain words uttered by Jeremiah in connection with these incidents. The last increase in number and detail towards the end of the



prophet's career and of the doomed city. The same method appears in the New Testament. There also the Sermon on the Mount contains a series of words of Jesus uttered at different periods of His career ; but a great part of the Gospels consists of selected incidents from His life, often with the words He uttered then. There, too, it will be noted that the incidents increase in number and detail towards the end.

Now it is generally recognised to-day that the Sermon on the Mount was not delivered as it stands. The sayings are a collection of utterances of the Lord on very varied subjects, dating from very different periods in His life ; and we understand them best when we give up trying to force them into connection with each other, and take each by itself. I am convinced that the habit of reading Jeremiah in chapters, as if each chapter were a longish sermon, dealing with a special subject, prevents us from seeing what is actually there. I have accordingly broken up these passages into what seem the short, pithy, oracular sayings which originally formed their basis. Everyone will not agree with my division, but this is of less importance than to recognise and follow the method. It is probable that anyone who reads this rendering for the first time will be irritated by the jerkiness which these breaks in the sense seem to introduce. But I venture to think that, if anyone will read a chapter in the Revised Version and then read it in this translation, he may be helped to understand the actual sense. Reading it in the chapter form, we inevitably attempt to make a connection between two utterances, and, if none be apparent, to force one. Unconsciously we distort the meaning of both oracles, if we attempt to force a connection which was never intended. If the oracles once existed separately, and each was uttered as a brief saying, memorable, curt, close-packed, we are more likely to reach their sense if we read each by itself. And it is only as a humble effort to represent Jeremiah's meaning more correctly that I venture to offer this translation at all.

# JEREMIAH.

i. 1-3. Utterances of Jeremiah ben Hilkiyah who came of a priestly family at Anathoth in the district of Benjamin, to whom the word of Yahweh came during the reign of Josiah ben Amon of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign, and continued to come during the reign of Jehoiakim ben Josiah of Judah till the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah ben Josiah of Judah when Jerusalem was taken into captivity in the fifth month.

## I. *The Call and the Commission of the prophet.*

i. 4-10. The word of Yahweh came to me :

I chose you before I formed you in the womb and I set you apart before you were born. I have appointed you a prophet to the nations. Then I said : Ah Yahweh, my Lord, I do not know how to speak, for I am but young. • Yahweh replied : Do not say I am but young, for you shall go to all to whom I send you and say everything which I order you. Have no fear before them, for I am with you to deliver you. Oracle of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>

Then Yahweh stretched out His hand and touched my mouth and said to me : See, I have put my words into your mouth. I have this day given you authority over the nations and kingdoms to tear up and to dash down, to destroy and to ruin, to build up and to plant.

## 2. *Two visions which declare that Yahweh is about to come and must come for judgment.*

(a) 11, 12. The vision of the almond-twigg.

The word of Yahweh came to me :

What do you see, Jeremiah ? I said : An almond-twigg. Yahweh replied : You have seen correctly : I am intently watching over My word to bring it to its result.

(b) 13-15, 17-19. The vision of the boiling pot.

Again the word of Yahweh came to me :

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase marks that the speaker is uttering no saying of his own, but something which he believes himself to have received by revelation.

What do you see ? I said : A boiling pot, and<sup>1</sup> the blower is from the North. Yahweh replied : Out of the North mischief is being blown against all the inhabitants of the land, and I will pronounce sentence against them for their evil conduct in forsaking Me, in sacrificing to other gods and in worshipping things they made for themselves. But gird up your loins, up and say to them everything which I order you. Have no fear before them, or else I will make you afraid before them. See, I have made you a wall of bronze against the whole land.<sup>2</sup> They shall fight against you but shall not have the mastery, for I am with you to deliver you. Oracle of Yahweh.

<sup>16</sup> (c) 16. A later addition.

For see, I am about to summon all the Kingdoms<sup>3</sup> of the North. Oracle of Yahweh. They shall come, and each of them shall set up his throne round Jerusalem over against its gates and against its walls, and against all the towns of Judah.

### 3. *A collection of oracles, dealing chiefly with the religious faithlessness of the nation.*

(a) ii. 1-3. The people have degenerated, showing less love and faith than at first.

The word of Yahweh came to me :

Go and shout this in the hearing of Jerusalem : Thus speaks Yahweh : I recall in your favour the love you had for Me in your early days, a love of the honeymoon, how you followed Me through the desert, that barren land. Then Israel was set apart to Yahweh as His property, so select and sacred that everyone who interfered with her was to be held guilty and find mischief light upon him. Oracle of Yahweh.

(b) 4-12. The apostasy of the nation means bitter ingratitude.

Listen to the word of Yahweh : O nation of Jacob and all the families of the nation of Israel. Thus speaks Yahweh : What wrong did your fathers find in Me, that they left Me and went after false gods to become false like them ? They never thought, where is Yahweh who brought us out of

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<sup>1</sup> MT here is corrupt and gives no good sense. With the help of LXX and with other emendations I have offered a translation which, it is right to say, is not accepted by all students.

<sup>2</sup> The phrases "a fortress, an iron pillar, and," "for the kings of Judah, its chiefs and priests and common people" are additions.

<sup>3</sup> So LXX ; MT reads "families of the Kingdoms."

Egypt, and led us through the desert, a waste and horrible place, given up to drought and desolation, where no human being travelled or lived? Yet it was I who brought you to a fertile country to enjoy its rich fruits; but you came only to make My land foul and to turn the inheritance which I gave into an abomination. The priests never thought, Where is Yahweh? Those who had charge of the law did not know My will; the rulers rebelled against Me, and the prophets prophesied in the name of Baal and went inquiring for useless gods. Therefore, oracle of Yahweh, I have still My right to assert against you, and against your children I will assert it. Go to the lands of the West<sup>1</sup> and inquire, send out East<sup>1</sup> and make full inquiry, find out whether anything of this kind has ever happened. Has any nation ever changed its god, nonentity though that was? Yet My people has put in place of Me, who am its glory, a helpless idol. The very heavens may be aghast at this and horribly afraid. Oracle of Yahweh.

(c) 13-19. Judah's dependence on foreign powers was another sign of national apostasy; to join with foreigners was to become tainted with their ideals.

My people has committed two sins; it has left Me, the spring of running water, and hewed for itself cracked cisterns which cannot even retain their stale water. Is Israel then a slave, bought in the market or born into bondage that he should become a prey to every man's will? Lions roar with full throat against him, they make his country a desolation, they waste his towns till they are empty. The people of Memphis and Pelusium are shaving you bare!<sup>2</sup> Is not the cause of it all, that you have left Yahweh your God?<sup>3</sup> What right, now, had you to go to Egypt and drink from the Nile, or to go to Assyria and drink from the Euphrates? The resulting disaster may teach you and convince you of your blunder; only know and recognise how bitter a thing it is for you to leave Yahweh your God, <sup>4</sup>so that I could no longer help you.<sup>4</sup> Oracle of Yahweh.

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<sup>1</sup> Literally MT reads: "The coast lands of 'Kittim,' and 'Kedar.'"

<sup>2</sup> MT is uncertain; the above translation implies a slight change.

<sup>3</sup> The last clause is untranslatable; it is a bad copy of the first clause in the following verse.

<sup>4</sup> The text is uncertain.

(d) 20-22. Judah's apostasy is of long standing.

It is an old habit with you to break your yoke, to burst your bonds, to say "I will not submit," for on every high hill and under every spreading tree you play the harlot. Yet I planted you a choice vine from a first-rate stock: What a change has come upon you, turning you into a wild and degenerate plant! Though now you should wash yourself with soda, not sparing soap, your vileness stands out in My sight. Oracle of Yahweh.

(e) 23-29. "The devil was sick—the devil a monk would be."

How can you say, I am not defiled?<sup>1</sup> Recognise your conduct in the valley, acknowledge what you have been doing. You dromedary in heat, changing its mates, whose appetite cannot be restrained! You wild ass of the desert, snuffing up the wind in its lust which any male that wants it need not tire itself to discover, for in its season anyone may find it! Do not run your feet sore and your throat dry. But you reply: It is useless to give advice<sup>2</sup> for I love strangers and mean still to follow them. As a thief is disappointed, when he is found out, so shall Israel be disappointed. King, leaders, priests and prophets together, who say to a wooden idol, thou art my father, and to a stone image, thou art my mother. They turned their backs to Me instead of their faces, but, let evil days come, they cry: Up and save us. Where then are the gods which you made for yourselves? Let them rise and save you in evil days, for as numerous as the towns of Judah are its gods,<sup>3</sup> and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the sacrifices its people offer to Baal.<sup>3</sup> Why then do you complain against Me, since you have all rebelled against Me? Oracle of Yahweh.

(f) 30-37. An oracle, which has suffered severely so that some parts are no longer intelligible. It seems to form a parallel to vv. 13-19 and to deal with the national apostasy as false worship and foreign alliance. Probably it really consists of fragments.

In vain have I punished members of the nation; they refused all correction: in vain has the sword, like a devouring

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<sup>1</sup> To make sure that the phrase was understood, an annotator added: "I have not gone after the 'baals'"; a correct, but unnecessary, explanation.

<sup>2</sup> I have added "to give advice" in order to make the sense clear.

<sup>3</sup> Clause added from LXX.

lion, devoured your prophets.<sup>1</sup> Have I been to Israel a desert or a land of horror? Why then has My people said: We are done with Thee, and will seek Thee no more?<sup>2</sup> Does a girl forget her ornaments or a bride her wedding dress? Yet My people has forgotten Me times without number. How excellently you guide your conduct so far as seeking out lovers is concerned: in good truth you are now capable of teaching the vilest women your methods.

On your hands is found the blood of innocents.<sup>3</sup> Then you said: Now I have made myself clean, surely His anger is turned away from me. I will judge you on the very ground of your having said: I have not sinned.

How can you with careless heart change your conduct? You shall be disappointed in Egypt as you were disappointed in Assyria. From Egypt too you shall come, ashamed, with your hands on your head; for Yahweh has rejected both your sources of confidence, and you shall prosper with neither.

4. *Another collection of oracles, dealing with the people's religion. It brings out more clearly what Jeremiah considered the two essentials of religion, God and the penitent soul.*

(a) iii. 1-5;<sup>4</sup> 19-20. False repentance and true.

If a man divorced his wife, and she, leaving him, went to another man, would he yet go back to her? Is not that woman<sup>5</sup> defiled? But you of your free will have played the whore with many lovers, and there is to be a return to Me, oracle of Yahweh. Look up to the bare heights and see whether there is one where you have not played the whore; you have sat by the public roads like a Bedawi in the desert; you have defiled the land with your lewdness and vileness, so that the showers failed and the rain did not fall. But with a forehead of brass<sup>6</sup> you refused to feel any shame. Even then did you not call Me "My husband," "Thou art the comrade from

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<sup>1</sup> MT is very dubious, and so is the reconstruction offered above.

<sup>2</sup> MT prefixes a clause of which I can make nothing. Fortunately its absence seems to make no difference in the sense.

<sup>3</sup> The second half of the verse is hopeless.

<sup>4</sup> For vv. 6-18 see p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> So with LXX; MT has "land."

<sup>6</sup> MT has "a whore's forehead."

my earliest days," "He will not always be angry," "He does not keep up a quarrel for ever"? See, you talked and did vile things, and were able to put up with the blend of fine talk and evil deeds.<sup>1</sup>

It was in my mind to treat you as a son, giving you a charming land, a superb heritage; and I thought that as a result you would call Me "Father" and never more forsake Me. But, as a woman becomes disloyal for her lover's sake, you Israelites have betrayed Me, oracle of Yahweh.

(b) 21-25. The false worship has brought moral impotence, and, since it cannot satisfy men's souls, disappointment.

Hark, I hear on the bare heights Israel weeping and mourning, because they have gone astray through forgetting Yahweh their God. Repent, ye prodigal sons; I will heal your wounds. Behold, we are Thine<sup>2</sup> for Thou art Yahweh, our God. Surely the riot<sup>3</sup> on the hills, the clamour on the mountains has proved itself a lie; surely in Yahweh our God is Israel's salvation. But the Baal-worship, so long as we can remember, has eaten out the vigour of our fathers, flocks and herds, sons and daughters. Let us then lie down in our shame, and let our dishonour cover us, for we have sinned against Yahweh our God; we and our fathers all our life long to this day have never listened to the voice of Yahweh our God. Oracle of Yahweh.

(c) iv. 1-4. There is no impotence where sincere repentance is present.

O Israel, if it is in your mind to return, to Me you must return; if it is in your mind to cast off your false idols, do not wander out of My Presence. <sup>4</sup>You shall take oath by Yahweh in truth, judgment, and righteousness; in Him nations bless themselves, in Him they boast.<sup>4</sup> For thus speaks Yahweh to the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: 'Plough up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns. When you circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, circumcise your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest My anger at your evil deeds blaze up and burn like a fire which cannot be quenched.

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<sup>1</sup> I have added "of fine talk and evil deeds" in order to bring out the sense.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX; MT has "we have come unto Thee."

<sup>3</sup> Adding a word with Driver.

<sup>4</sup> Probably this is an addition.



(d) iii. 6-13. An oracle, later in Jeremiah's life, which says Judah is worse than Israel, because, warned by its neighbour's fate, it has only carried out a reform which is false in principle.

Yahweh said to me during the reign of Josiah : Have you noticed what apostate Israel has done, how she climbed every high hill and went under every spreading tree and played the whore there ? I thought that, when this was past, she would return to Me, but she did not. Her sister Judah, the traitress, saw it, saw too<sup>1</sup> how, because apostate Israel had broken her marriage vow, I divorced her publicly ; but, instead of being afraid, she went in turn, and played the whore, committing adultery in her hot lust<sup>2</sup> with idols of wood and stone. In spite of all this Judah the traitress did not return to Me with her whole mind, but insincerely.<sup>3</sup>

Yahweh said to me : Apostate Israel has put herself in the right better than Judah the traitress. Go and shout this message towards the North : Return to Me,<sup>4</sup> apostate Israel, oracle of Yahweh. I will not frown upon you, for I am merciful. Only acknowledge that you have sinned against Yahweh your God, and that, not listening to Me, you have played the light of love under every spreading tree, oracle of Yahweh.

(e) iii. 14-18. A later generation, understanding the "return to Me," v. 13, not of repentant return to God, but of return from exile, added a prophecy about this return.

Return, O apostate children, oracle of Yahweh, for I am your husband, and I will take you one from a town here, two from a family there, and will bring you to Zion, and will set over you rulers after My own mind who shall govern you wisely and prudently. And when in those days, oracle of Yahweh, you increase greatly in numbers in the land, men shall cease to say, "the ark of the covenant of Yahweh," it shall not come into their mind, or be remembered, or sought after or remade ; in that time men shall give the name "throne of Yahweh" to Jerusalem, and all nations shall gather together there for the sake of Yahweh, and shall follow no longer their own stubborn and evil thoughts. In those days Judah and Israel shall be

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<sup>1</sup> So with Syr. ; MT has "And I saw."

<sup>2</sup> Omit with LXX : "and the land was defiled."

<sup>3</sup> Omit with LXX : "Oracle of Yahweh."

<sup>4</sup> "To Me," added from LXX.



reunited and shall together come out of the land of the North to the land which I gave into the possession of your fathers.

5. *Jeremiah believed that Yahweh was to reveal Himself in the day of the Lord, which, because the world had forgotten the real things and the lasting values, must be a day of judgment. In this section is a series of oracles dealing with the subject.*

(a) iv. 5-8. The lion from the North, Ezekiel's Gog, is about to come. The prophet describes the dismay and ruin which result.

Proclaim aloud in Judah and Jerusalem, send a trumpet-blast through the land to make men hear, shout your loudest, say: Let all gather and make their way to the walled towns. Set up a rallying flag at Zion, bring your stuff into safety, delay not, for mischief, grave and disastrous, is coming<sup>1</sup> from the North. A lion has risen from its lair; a destroyer of nations, advancing from his place, is on his way to make your land a waste and turn your towns into uninhabited ruins. Therefore put on mourning and raise a wailing cry, for the fierce anger of Yahweh is not turned away from us.

(b) 9-12. Another picture, perhaps two, of wasted Judah.

In that day, oracle of Yahweh, the courage of king and chiefs will die in them, the priests will be dazed and the bewildered prophets say:<sup>2</sup> Ah, Yahweh, surely Thou hast cheated this people and Jerusalem, promising peace; yet a sword is piercing to the very heart.

At this time there is appointed for this people and for Jerusalem a blasting sirocco out of the parched desert;<sup>3</sup> a wind, not fitted to fan or purify, a wind too powerful for such effects is coming at My bidding. Now I am about to call them to judgment.

(c) 13-17. A picture of the foe from the North.

He is coming up like driving clouds, his chariots are like a stormwind, his horses are swifter than panthers. Woe unto us, we are lost. Oh, Jerusalem, make clean your heart that you may be delivered; how long are evil plans to make their

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<sup>1</sup> Not "I bring" of M'T. According to v. 8 it is not Yahweh who is speaking.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX; MT has "and I said."

<sup>3</sup> The text is uncertain; the above does not pretend to give more than the general sense.

home with you ? Hark, a messenger from Dan, a bringer of bad news from Mount Ephraim ; nations have been enrolled and summoned against Jerusalem, besiegers from a distant land are defying the towns of Judah, like field-watchers, they ring her round on every side, for she has rebelled against Me, oracle of Yahweh.

(d) 18-22. A cry of regret and grief over the inevitable ruin.

These things are the outcome of your own conduct ; your evil deeds have brought it about that the ruin is bitter and mortal. Ah, my heart, my heart, I writhe in pain, my mind is in sore trouble, I cannot hold my peace, for hark, I seem to hear the trumpet-sound and battle-cry. Blow follows on blow, the whole land is ruined. Suddenly they have torn down my<sup>1</sup> tent and its hangings. How long must I see the war-signal and hear the blaring trumpet ? My people are corrupt, they do not know Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> They are perverse children, with no real understanding, wise in going wrong, foolish for every good purpose.

(e) 23-26. Chaos come again.

I looked out on the world, it was chaos ; on the heavens, they held no light. I looked out on the mountains, they were reeling ; and all the hills quivered. I looked out ; no man was to be seen, and every bird of the sky had fled. I looked out ; the fertile earth was desert and all its towns were burned out through the act of Yahweh, through His fierce anger.

(f) 27-31. Ruin of the world and especially of Jerusalem.

Thus speaks Yahweh : The whole world shall become a waste.<sup>3</sup> The earth shall mourn and the heavens grow dark above, for I have spoken and may not change My mind. I have resolved and may not go back on My word. At the rumour of cavalry and archers<sup>4</sup> every town takes flight ; men creep into the woods and climb the rocks, leaving the towns forsaken and tenantless.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., Jerusalem's.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of MT "me" ; Yahweh is not the speaker.

<sup>3</sup> The next clause must be omitted as having come from xxx. 11.

<sup>4</sup> One might venture to read "artillery." The archers were the ancient artillery.

<sup>5</sup> Four words here in MT are hopeless.

What good will it do you to put on your finest clothes and don your jewellery and paint your face? It is waste labour to make yourself fine. The lovers despise you, are out for your life. I can hear a cry like that of a woman writhing in her pangs at the birth of her first child. It is the shriek of Zion, gasping, throwing up her arms: "Woe is me, my very soul is faint before the murderous crew."

6. *A number of oracles, of varying date and origin, dealing with the sin and doom of the nation. The sins dealt with are more of an anti-social character than those in Sections 3 and 4.*

(a) v. 1-6. The condition of Jerusalem and its fate.

Run through the streets of Jerusalem, hunt among its open spaces,<sup>1</sup> see whether there is one man who acts justly and aims at honesty, for whose sake I may pardon her. If they use the name of Yahweh at all, it is to perjure themselves by swearing to a lie. Yahweh, art not Thou intent on honesty? Thou hast punished them, but they are none the better, refusing to learn from experience; they have set their faces like a flint, refusing to repent. Then I thought: Ah, well, these are the humble people who are foolish, because they have never learned the religion of Yahweh or how to worship their God. I will go and speak to those who are better off, because they have learned the religion of Yahweh and how to worship their God. They too have wholly broken all bonds, cast off all restraint. Therefore a lion from a thicket tears, a desert-wolf wastes them, a panther prowls round their towns so that any one who ventures beyond the walls becomes its prey, for their sins are many and their lapses are constantly repeated.

(b) 7-11. Two short oracles on the corruption of Judah.

How can I pardon them, oracle of Yahweh,<sup>2</sup> for, deserting Me, they acknowledge gods which are no gods? When I fed them to the full, they became disloyal to Me and settled down to play the whore from Me. Stallions, neighing in their appetite for the mare! Must I not, on this account, punish them and on a people like this must I not take vengeance, oracle of Yahweh?

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<sup>1</sup> One or two clauses, mere accretions which weaken the force of the original, have been removed.

<sup>2</sup> With slight change of MT.

Go up among her vine-rows and ravage without causing utter destruction, tear down her branches for they no longer belong to Yahweh, since Israel and Judah have played the traitor to Him, oracle of Yahweh.

(c) 12-17. A doom on Judah, more like Section 5.

They have denied Yahweh, saying: He does nothing, no misfortune shall befall us; nor shall we experience sword and famine . . .<sup>1</sup> Therefore thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth: because they speak in this way, I am about to make My word in your mouth a fire, and this people dry sticks; and it shall devour them.

O Israel, oracle of Yahweh, I am about to bring upon you from afar an enduring and ancient nation, speaking an unknown language so that you cannot understand what they say. Their quiver is an open grave and all their men warriors. They shall consume your harvest and your food, your sons and daughters, your flocks and herds, your vines and fig trees. They shall wreck too in war the strong towns in which you put such confidence.

(d) 18-19. A later addition applying the preceding oracle to the Babylonian captivity.

Even in those days, oracle of Yahweh, I will not make a final end of you. And when men say: Why did Yahweh our God bring such things as these upon us, you shall say to them: As you deserted Me and served the gods of the stranger in your own land, you are serving strangers in a land which is not your own.

(e) 20-29. Probably later than Jeremiah. The condition of the people resembles that in some of the later Psalms.

Proclaim this in Jacob, announce it in Judah. Listen, O foolish and thoughtless people, who have eyes but will not see, ears but will not listen. Have you no fear of Me, oracle of Yahweh, no awe in My presence? Yet I have set the sand as a limit to the sea according to a constant and unfaltering order, so that its waters foam in helpless fury, its waves roar but must keep their bounds. But this people had the mind of a thorough rebel; it has carried its revolt to a full issue. They never thought: Let us fear Yahweh our God, who gives rain and late

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<sup>1</sup> Any translation of v. 13 must be a mere guess. It seems to refer to the "false" prophets who denied or ignored the need for any purifying judgment.

rain, each at its ordered time, and who maintains for us the regular harvest seasons. Your sins have upset the ordered seasons and your iniquities have ruined your prosperity. There are found among My people bad men who set traps to catch men as bird-catchers do to snare birds, and who make money, so that, as a cage is full of birds, their houses are full of the proceeds of their swindling. By such means they have become great and prosperous,<sup>1</sup> excelling in base plans; they deny justice to the orphan and exploit the poor, so they prosper. Must I not, on this account, punish them; and on 'a nation such as this must I not take vengeance, oracle of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup>

(f) 30-31. The nation prefers leaders who make slight moral demands.

An amazing and horrible thing has befallen the country; the prophets prophesy lies, the priests issue decisions by such guidance, and My people love to have it so. But what shall you do, when this has brought its inevitable end?

(g) vi. 1-5. Doom on Jerusalem under the figure of conquest.

Men of Benjamin, escape with all your property out of Jerusalem, sound an alarm in Tekoa, set up an alarm-signal at Beth-hakkerem, for misfortune, even grave ruin, is peering out of the North . . .<sup>3</sup> Shepherds with their flocks are coming against her on every side. They pitch their tents and settle down as though the pasture were their own. Make ready to fight against her, up and let us attack at noon. Woe unto us for the day has turned and the shadows are lengthening out. Up and let us attack by night and wreck her palaces.

(h) vi. 6-8.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Hew down her trees, cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem. Woe to the false city,<sup>4</sup> which is given over to oppression. As a cistern keeps its water fresh, she keeps her sin fresh; in her one hears continually the cry "violence and robbery,"<sup>5</sup> before Me perpetually are sickness and wounds. O Jerusalem, accept instruction, lest I turn wholly away from you and make you an uninhabited desolation.

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<sup>1</sup> Omit with LXX two additional verbs describing such men.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from v. 9, above.

<sup>3</sup> I can make nothing of v. 2, except that it mentions Zion.

<sup>4</sup> Reading with LXX.

<sup>5</sup> A cry for help like our "Stop thief."

(i) vi. 9-12. Jerusalem like a wasted vineyard.

Thus speaks Yahweh :

Glean like a vineyard what is left of Israel, examine every twig like one who harvests grapes. Is there a man to whom I might gravely speak in the hope of his listening? Their ears are stopped so that they will not pay attention; the word of Yahweh has become to them as the nagging of a scold in which they find no delight. Yet I am full of My anger<sup>1</sup> and weary of restraining it; I must pour it out on the child in the street and the knots of young men; with them man and woman, the elder and man full of years must be included. Their houses, fields, wives, shall be given over to strangers, for I am about to stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land, oracle of Yahweh.

(j) vi. 13-15. The character of the people. The oracle is repeated at viii. 10-12.

Humble and great are equally greedy, prophet and priest alike are liars. These last cure the desperate state of My people with cheap remedies, crying "Peace, peace," when there can be no peace. Are they ashamed, when they have acted abominably? They are not in the least ashamed, they do not even know how to blush. Therefore in the day of My visitation they too, falling with those who fall, shall collapse. Yahweh has spoken.

(k) vi. 16-20. They have not been unwarned, and sacrifice is no substitute for obedience.

Thus speaks Yahweh : Post yourselves on the watch by the ways, and ask about the ancient paths as to which has been the way of true prosperity, and walk in that, so finding rest for yourselves; but they said : We will not go. I raised up for your benefit men on the outlook; listen to the trumpet-call; but they said : We will not listen. Therefore, hear O heavens and bear witness against them<sup>2</sup> : hear O earth, I am about to bring on this nation a disaster, the outcome of their disobedience, because they refused to listen to My words and rejected My law. Why then should you bring Me incense from Sheba and

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT has "the anger of Yahweh."

<sup>2</sup> MT is corrupt. The above translation represents an effort to bring meaning from it, but claims to be no more.

sweet cane from a distant country ? Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable and your sacrifices give Me no pleasure.

(l) vi. 21. A fragment, probably later.

Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh : I am placing in the way of this people a stumbling block over which they shall stumble ; fathers and children, neighbour and friend shall perish together.

(m) vi. 22-26. Jerusalem's doom.

Thus speaks Yahweh : A nation is coming from the North, a mighty people is awaking from the ends of the earth. They seize bow and spear, they are cruel and pitiless, their yell is like the sea in storm, they ride on horses ; and like one man they are drawn up in array against you, O Zion. We have heard a rumour about them and our hands drop pithless, pain has seized us like a woman's birth-pangs. Venture not into the open country, walk not by the roads, for the enemy's sword spreads terror everywhere. Let Jerusalem put on mourning and sprinkle herself with ashes. Mourn for your own fate with bitter sorrow as men mourn their well-beloved, for suddenly will come against you<sup>1</sup> the ravager.

(n) vi. 27-30. Jeremiah's function in the nation.

I have set you among My people to examine and test their conduct, as a silver refiner deals with his material.<sup>2</sup> They are all persistent rebels, dealers in slander, utterly corrupt. The bellows snort, fire is heaped on, but everything is waste labour, the slag cannot be separated out.<sup>3</sup> Rejected silver they may be called, for Yahweh has rejected them.

7. vii. 1-4, 8-15. *Jeremiah's Temple Address. For its effects on him compare C. 26.*

The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah : Stand in the court<sup>4</sup> of the temple and announce there the following : Listen to Yahweh's message, all you Judeans who enter by these gates to worship Yahweh. Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel :

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX ; MT has "against us."

<sup>2</sup> I have added "deals with his material" in order to bring out the sense.

<sup>3</sup> The text is uncertain, having been loaded with explanatory matter. But the general sense is clear.

<sup>4</sup> MT "gate" : "Court" is the reading at xxvi. 2.



Reform your entire conduct so that I may dwell with you<sup>1</sup> in this place. Put no confidence in lying words such as "The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh is here." Recognise the false and unprofitable talk in which you are putting confidence. Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, sacrifice to Baal and follow strange and unknown gods, and then come and stand in My presence in this house which is specially dedicated to Me and say "We are delivered in order to repeat abominable deeds of the same kind" ? Has this house which even you acknowledge to be specially dedicated to Me, become a den of murderers ?

I too have noted this, oracle of Yahweh. But go to My Sanctuary at Shiloh, which in the beginning was dedicated to My worship, and acknowledged by Me ; mark what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. Now, because you have done the deeds I have described,<sup>2</sup> paying no attention to My repeated warnings and disregarding My solemn summons, I will do to the house which is dedicated to Me and in which you put such confidence as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out from My presence, as I cast your brother nation, the whole race of Ephraim.

(a) vii. 5-7. An editor, who took the "place" to be the country or city, and not the temple, added a little prophetic sermon.

But, if you reform your conduct, acting uprightly in your relations to one another, ceasing to oppress the foreigner, orphan and widow, ceasing to shed innocent blood in this place, giving up the worship of strange gods which can only bring you harm, I will permit you to live in this place, in the country which I gave to your fathers for all time.

Probably, he also added in v. 14 to the threat against the temple "and to the place which I gave to you and your fathers."

(b) vii. 16-20. An oracle against a special form of idolatry. If the oracle has anything to do with Jeremiah, it must belong to a very different period from that of the temple address.

As for you, pray not for this people, raise no plea on their behalf and do not intercede with Me, for I will not listen.

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<sup>1</sup> So, changing the vowels, but not the consonants. MT reads "that I may cause you to dwell in this place." But the people did not live in the temple.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX, omit "oracle of Yahweh."

Do you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem? The children are gathering sticks, the fathers are kindling fires, and the women are kneading dough to make cakes in honour of the queen of heaven; they also pour out libations to strange gods so as to annoy Me. Do they really annoy Me, oracle of Yahweh, do they not rather annoy themselves to their own shame? Therefore thus speaks Yahweh. My fierce anger is about to be poured out on this place, on man and beast, tree and crop, and it shall burn unquenchably.

(c) vii. 21-23, 28. Jeremiah's judgment on sacrifice, closely connected in subject, if not in time, with the temple address.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices, and eat them all like ordinary flesh, for, when I brought your fathers out of Egypt, I said nothing to them, and I gave them no orders about burnt offerings and other sacrifices. But I gave them this order: Listen to My voice, and I will be your God and you shall be My people and you shall walk in the way which I command so that you may prosper. This is the nation which never listened to the voice of Yahweh and submitted to no restraint, faithfulness is utterly dead and never spoken of by it.

(d) vii. 24-27. Someone added a little sermon on the sins of the fathers, a favourite subject with the exiles who believed they were expiating those sins.

They did not listen and turned no ready ear, they walked after the suggestions of their own stubborn and wicked hearts, they grew worse instead of better. From the day your fathers came out of Egypt till now, though I sent you all My servants, the prophets, never failing to send, they did not listen to Me, they turned no ready ear, but stiffened their necks, behaving worse than their fathers. You, too, may deliver all these messages, but they will not listen to you; you may summon them, but they will give you no reply.

(e) vii. 29-34; viii. 1-3. Two oracles, later than Jeremiah, on Tophet.

Take off and cast away your crown, intone a dirge on the bare heights, for Yahweh has rejected and forsaken a race with which He is angry. For the children of Judah have done wrong in My sight, oracle of Yahweh, they have set up their

idols in the house which is dedicated to Me so as to defile it, they have built the high places of Tophet in the valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters—a thing which I never ordered and which never came into My mind. Therefore days are at hand, oracle of Yahweh, when it shall no longer be called Tophet and valley of Ben Hinnom, but valley of butchery, and Tophet shall become a cemetery for want of room to bury. The dead bodies of this people shall become food for the birds and beasts of prey with no one to scare them away. And I will silence in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem all sounds of gladness and joy, the voice of bridegroom and bride, for the land shall be made a waste.

At that time, oracle of Yahweh, the bones of the kings and leaders of Judah, the bones of priests, prophets and citizens of Jerusalem shall be taken out of their graves and scattered before the sun, moon and stars which the men in their lifetime loved and served, obeyed, consulted and worshipped. Instead of being collected and buried, these shall be treated like dung on the fields. And all who are left of this wicked race in the places to which I have scattered them shall prefer death to life. Oracle of Yahweh Tsebaoth.

## 8. *The incorrigible heart and its doom.*

(a) viii. 4-7. The incorrigible heart.

Thus speaks Yahweh<sup>1</sup>: As a rule, if a man falls, he gets up again, if he wanders from the road, he finds his way back. Why has this people<sup>2</sup> wandered, going permanently astray? They are obstinate in unfaithfulness, refusing to repent. I listened, but heard no whisper of the kind; not a man among them repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Everyone holds on his course, like a horse galloping into battle. Even a stork knows its route and time for migration through the sky, the dove and swallow keep the periods when they arrive; but my people do not recognise the directions of Yahweh.

(b) viii. 8, 9, 13. Worse, because misled.

How can you say, we are wise men who possess the law of Yahweh? Yet it is perfectly plain that the lying pen of scribes

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit "Say to them."

<sup>2</sup> With LXX omit "Jerusalem."

has turned this into a lie. Wise men are disappointed, full of dismay, tricked; what can their wisdom do for them, when they have rejected the word of Yahweh?<sup>1</sup> . . . . I will wholly destroy them, oracle of Yahweh, there are no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig-tree, the leaves are withered.<sup>2</sup>

(c) viii. 14-17. The doom.

Why are we sitting still? Let us gather together and go into the walled towns and die there, since our God has brought us to our doom, giving us poison to drink because of our sin against Yahweh. We hoped for peace, but no good fortune came, for a healing time and we found dismay. The snorting of his horses can be heard from Dan, at the noise of his neighing stallions the whole earth trembles; when he arrives, he will sweep the earth bare of its produce, the town of its inhabitants. I am about to send among you deadly snakes, which cannot be charmed; and they shall bite you, oracle of Yahweh.

9. *Two songs, full of pity and sorrow, over the people's condition and fate.*

(a) viii. 18-23. There is no relief from sorrow; my heart grows faint within me. Hark to the wail of my people from the land far and wide,<sup>3</sup> "Is Yahweh no longer in Zion; has her King forsaken her?" "But why have they roused Me to anger by their foreign and worthless idols?" "Harvest is past, summer is over, but we are unhelped." The ruin of my people has broken my heart. I am overpowered with sorrow and dismay. Is there no healing balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? It must be so, or why is the wound of my people not yet healed? Would God my head were water and my eyes a well of tears, so that day and night I might weep over the dead of my people!

(b) ix. 1-2. Would God I were in the desert in some lonely haunt of travelling folk, that, leaving my people, I might be quit of them, for they are all adulterers, a brood of traitors! They bend their tongues like bows; falsehood, not loyalty has

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<sup>1</sup> Vv. 10-12 are a repetition of vi. 13-15. When, following LXX, we omit them here, the connection of thought is improved.

<sup>2</sup> The last clause is hopeless, and is omitted by LXX.

<sup>3</sup> Or, perhaps, "because of oppressors."

power<sup>1</sup> in the land ; they advance from crime to crime and do not acknowledge Yahweh,<sup>2</sup> oracle of Yahweh.

10. *Two oracles which describe the people's condition. Mutual confidence, the cement of human society, has disappeared.*

(a) ix. 3-5. Every man may well be on his guard against his neighbour, no man may trust his brother, for every brother is a perfect Jacob at supplanting and every neighbour is a slanderer. They cheat each other, no man speaking the truth ; they train their tongues to lie, <sup>3</sup>are perverse and foolish.<sup>3</sup> They heap violence on violence, deceit on deceit, and refuse to acknowledge Me, oracle of Yahweh.

(b) ix. 6-8. Therefore thus speaks Yahweh : I must try them in the melting-pot, for how can I act otherwise in view of My people's vileness ?<sup>4</sup> Their tongue is a dart, deadly through its treachery ; a man has peace with his neighbour in his mouth, but in his thoughts is laying a snare for him. <sup>5</sup>Must I not on this account punish them, and on a nation such as this must I not take vengeance ?<sup>5</sup> Oracle of Yahweh.

11. *Two laments over ruined Judah.*

(a) ix. 9-11. Weep for the hills and lament over the steppes, since they lie waste and untravelled ; the sound of feeding sheep is heard on them no more, bird and beast have utterly vanished from them. I will turn Jerusalem, too, into heaps, a jackal's lair ; the towns of Judah I will make an uninhabited waste. Who is so wise as to understand the reason, who is so much in the secret of Yahweh as to expound why the land is ruined, as waste and untravelled as any desert ?

(a) ix. 12-15. Secondary ; a slightly stolid person, not recognising the irony of v. 11, proceeded to expound the reason which seemed so obvious to the prophet as to need no special illumination.

Yahweh said, it is due to their forsaking My law which I set before them and to their refusal to listen to My voice. Instead of walking according to the law, they walked after their own

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> MT "me," but it is the prophet who speaks.

<sup>3</sup> An amended and uncertain text.

<sup>4</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>5</sup> Also at v. 29.

stubborn minds and after the Baalism which they learned from their fathers. Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: I will feed them with wormwood and give them poison to drink, and I will scatter them among nations which neither they nor their fathers knew, and I will make the sword pursue them to their utter ruin.

(b) ix. 16-21. Thus speaks Yahweh<sup>1</sup>: Summon the mourning women, send in haste for the skilled women. Let them raise a dirge over us, let our own eyes stream with tears, our eyelids gush over with water, for, hark, a wail is heard in Zion, "What a disaster has befallen us, what a dishonour, in that we are expelled from the land and obliged to abandon our homes!"

Listen, O women, to the message of Yahweh, let your ears take in the word of His mouth, teach your daughters a dirge and your friends a funeral wail. Death climbs in at our windows, finds entry into our palaces, cutting down the children in the streets, the young men in the public places,<sup>2</sup> and human carcasses lie like dung on the open field, like ungathered sheaves behind the reaper.

**I 2.** ix. 22-23. *The only source of confidence for man.*

Thus speaks Yahweh: Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, nor a strong man of his strength, nor a rich man of his wealth; but let him who boasts boast of his ability to know Me, how I am Yahweh who founds mercy, justice, righteousness in the world and how these things are My delight, oracle of Yahweh.

**I 3.** ix. 24-25. *An oracle which I translate as it stands. As, however, I have no idea what it means, I do not pretend to know whether Jeremiah wrote it. If we omit a word and a preposition in verse 24, we get the declaration that Yahweh was about to punish all uncircumcision. Then verse 25 would say that the heathen were uncircumcised in flesh, Israel uncircumcised in mind, and both were equally ignorant of the true mind of Yahweh. But this may seem a somewhat violent method of forcing a meaning on the text.*

Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will punish all

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<sup>1</sup> Omit "be wise" with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX omit "Say thou, thus is the oracle of Yahweh."

who are circumcised in uncircumcision, Egypt and Judah, Edom and Ammon, Moab and the crop-haired tribes that live in the desert, for all the nations are uncircumcised and all Israel is uncircumcised in mind.

14. *A condemnation of idolatry. It seems to be made up of sentences written to convince the Babylonian exiles of the higher character of their own religion and keep them faithful Jews. Note its striking likeness to certain passages in Deutero-Isaiah. Not by Jeremiah.*

x. 1-16. Hear, O Israel, the word Yahweh has spoken to you. Thus speaks Yahweh: Do not learn to imitate the heathen and practise no veneration for the heavenly bodies, as the heathen do. For the worship of the heathen is absurd: a man hews a forest-log, the mere product of a wood-man with an axe. He decks it out with silver and gold, and then someone makes it firm with hammer and nails to keep it from tumbling down. The thing stands dumb like a scarecrow in a kitchen-garden, needing to be carried here and there, because it cannot move. Have no fear of such things as these, because they are powerless for good or evil.

There is none like Thee, O Yahweh. Thou art great and Thy name is great in power. Who will not fear Thee, King of all worlds?<sup>1</sup> Fear is due to Thee, for among the heathen sages and their pantheons there is none like Thee.

One and all they are stupid and senseless . . .<sup>2</sup> They all consist of beaten silver brought from Tarshish and of gold from Ophir; they are made by joiner and goldsmith, decked out in purple and crimson, the product of skilled men. But Yahweh is the true God, the living God, the eternal King; when He is angry, the world trembles and the nations cannot bear His wrath. This is what you must say about them: The gods who did not make heaven and earth shall vanish from off the earth and from under heaven.<sup>3</sup> Yahweh made the earth by His power, He made creation stable by His wisdom, He

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<sup>1</sup> So with the Syriac Version; MT has "the nations."

<sup>2</sup> The second half of the verse is hopeless.

<sup>3</sup> The verse is not in Hebrew, but Aramaic. Probably it was meant to suggest or even to prescribe what the Jews were to answer, when invited to worship idols, and especially to worship the stars.



stretched out heaven by His insight. At the sound of His thunder the waters in heaven are moved, He raises mists from the end of the earth, He sends lightning flashing through the rain, out of His treasure-houses He sends abroad the wind. Mankind is struck dumb and senseless, every maker of idols is put to shame, for his images are proved a lie and destitute of breath. They are a delusion and a fraud, which break down whenever they are tested. He who is Jacob's proud possession is not like these, for He is the creator of the universe, and Israel is His favoured tribe. Yahweh 'Tsebaoth is His Name.<sup>1</sup>

15. *This section contains fragments of oracles of disaster on Jerusalem by Jeremiah. Verses 17, 18, however, I can only translate by dint of emendations which make the result so uncertain as to be valueless. I prefer to omit the verses.*

x. 19-22. Woe is me, I am ruined ; my wound is deep. But I thought, this is my wound and I must bear it. My tent is wrecked, all its cords are broken ; my children are gone, so that no one is left to set up my tent again and renew its flaps.

The shepherds are foolish and have asked no guidance of Yahweh, therefore they have utterly failed and their entire flock is dispersed.

Hark, a rumour comes flying, and a loud clamour from the land of the North : Judah's towns are to be turned into a waste, a jackals' lair.

16. x. 23-25. *A cry of distress from the nation in exile, later than Jeremiah.*

I have come to know, O Yahweh, that his way is in no man's power, nor is it within his power to control his steps. Set me right, O Yahweh, but with judgment, not in Thy wrath, lest Thou make me very small. Pour out Thy fury on the heathen who have no knowledge of Thee and on the families who do not acknowledge Thee, for they have utterly devoured Jacob and wasted his home.

17. xi. 1-14. *An oracle which has been so worked over that it has become impossible to detect what is original in it and especially to know what was meant by "the covenant." Many students regard it as entirely later than Jeremiah.*

<sup>1</sup> Verses 12-10 appear again at li. 15-19, among the oracles on Babylon.

A message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah :

Listen to the words of this covenant and declare them to the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem, and say to them : Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel : Accursed be he who does not listen to the words of this covenant. I enjoined it on your fathers when I brought them out of Egypt, that iron furnace, saying : Listen to My voice and exactly obey all My commands, and ye shall be My people and I shall be your God, so that I may keep the oath I swore to your fathers, promising to give them a land flowing with milk and honey as you have it now. Then I answered : Yes, Yahweh. And Yahweh said to me : Proclaim these words in the towns of Judah and streets of Jerusalem, and say, Listen to the words of this covenant and obey them, for, from the time when I brought your fathers out of Egypt down to the present day, I solemnly and persistently charged them to listen to My voice. But they did not listen or pay any attention ; instead, they all walked after their own stubborn and wicked mind. So I brought upon them the contents of this covenant which I commanded them to follow and which they did not follow.

Further Yahweh spoke to me : There exists a conspiracy among the men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem. They have gone back to the old sins of their fathers, who refused to listen to My words, they have followed strange gods in serving them. Israel and Judah have repudiated the covenant which I made with their fathers. Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh ; I am about to bring upon them a disaster from which they cannot escape. They may cry to Me then, but I will not listen to them. The towns of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem may also go and cry to the gods to whom they are offering sacrifice, but these shall not save them in their day of disaster. For, O Judah, you have as many gods as you have towns, and Jerusalem has not more streets than it has altars set up to sacrifice to Baal. As for you, you must no more pray for this people, nor for their sake offer petition or prayer, for I will pay no attention to them, when they cry to Me in the day of their disaster.

18. *The people must be expelled from Palestine in spite of its sacrifices.*

xi. 15, 16. What right has My beloved to live in My house, so long as she cherishes vile thoughts? Can vows and holy flesh take away your sin, or can you be saved after that fashion?<sup>1</sup> Yahweh called you a spreading olive of lovely shape; at His thunder its leaf withered.<sup>2</sup>

(a) xi. 17. Someone added an exposition of v. 16.

It was Yahweh Tsebaoth who planted you, who also decreed disaster against you, because of the vileness of Israel and Judah and their deeds, provoking Me by sacrificing to Baal.

19. xi. 18-20. *Jeremiah sadly recognises how, as soon as he learned the true will of Yahweh, he had occasion to learn human opposition.*

Yahweh instructed me and I came to understand; then Thou didst make me see their conduct. I became like an unsuspecting lamb led out to be butchered, ignorant that what was intended against me was, "let us hew down the tree in its full vigour,<sup>3</sup> let us cut him off from among the living, so that his name may be wholly forgotten." But Yahweh, Thou righteous judge, who dost try the most intimate thought, let me see Thee repay them, for I commit my cause to Thee.

(a) xi. 21-23. An editorial comment, which referred the saying to a particular period in the prophet's life, and added its idea of the result of committing a cause to Yahweh.

Therefore thus Yahweh speaks about the men of Anathoth who are seeking your life, and who say that you must not prophesy in Yahweh's name on penalty of death.

Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth: I will punish them; their young men<sup>4</sup> shall die by the sword, their sons and daughters perish through famine, no one shall be spared among them, for in the year of their punishment I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth.

20. *"Will the day's journey take the whole, long day? From morn to night, my friend."*

xii. 1-6. Thou art ever in the right, O Yahweh, when I enter a plea before Thee. Yet I would urge one question: Why do

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<sup>1</sup> M'T is impossible. The above is Driver's rendering, based on the LXX.

<sup>2</sup> Again the LXX must help to a rendering of the obscure Hebrew.

<sup>3</sup> MT has "with its bread."

<sup>4</sup> So with LXX; M'T has "the young men."

bad men prosper and scoundrels live at ease ? Thou dost plant them ; and they strike root, flourish and bear fruit. Yet, while they talk about Thee, they keep Thee remote from their real thoughts. But Thou knowest me thoroughly, and hast tested how my heart is Thine. <sup>1</sup>Pick them out like sheep for slaughter, set them apart for the day of butchery.<sup>1</sup> How long is the land to mourn and every green thing in the fields to wither ? Beast and bird are disappearing through the wickedness of the inhabitants of the land, who say : God never notices what we do.<sup>2</sup>

You have run with footmen and they have tired you out, how then can you hold your own with horsemen ? You are taking cover<sup>3</sup> in a quiet land, how then will you act when Jordan floods its banks ? Because even your relations and your kindred have played you false and reviled you with open throat, have no trust in men, when they say smooth things to you.

(a) xii. 7-13. Probably a late section, belonging to the period when Palestine was lying derelict after the exile. A prophet declares how none but Yahweh cares for it.

I have forsaken My land and abandoned My peculiar people ; I have delivered over My well-beloved into the power of its enemies. Because My peculiar people became like a forest-lion, roaring fiercely against Me, I hated it. They became a . . . vulture, which attacked Me.<sup>4</sup> Come together then, all you wild beasts, gather to the prey. Many owners have ruined My vineyard, trampling down My portion, turning My lovely portion into a waste desert. They have made it a waste, to My regret it lies desolate : the whole land is ravaged, for no one gives it a thought. On the bare heights in this wasted land brigands roam, for Yahweh's sword devours the world from end to end, so that there is peace for no human being. From a sowing of wheat the harvest is thorns, men have toiled themselves to death on what is futile, they are ashamed of the harvest—the harvest of the fierce anger of Yahweh.

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<sup>1</sup> Possibly this is an addition. Half of it is absent from the LXX, and it has little or no connection with the rest of the thought.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> With the change of a letter.

<sup>4</sup> MT is hopeless. The above is Erbr's emendation.

(b) xii. 14-17. Another post-exilic section.

Thus speaks Yahweh against all the evil neighbours who meddle with the inheritance which I have given to My people Israel, I will pluck them out of their territory and I will pluck Judah out from among them. And after that is past, I will again have mercy on them, and restore each of them to its own territory.

And if they are willing to learn the practices of My people, to swear by the name of Yahweh, as they taught My people to swear by Baal, they shall have a sure place among My people ; but, if any of them refuses, I will pluck out that nation for good and all, oracle of Yahweh.

21. *The spoiled girdle ; contact with Babylonian ideas and worship is threatening to corrupt the people. Probably this is the speech of a Babylonian prophet, since it is difficult to believe that Jeremiah could cross the desert to Euphrates four times.*

xiii. 1-11. Thus said Yahweh to me : Go and buy a linen girdle and fasten it round your loins, but do not put it into water. So I bought a girdle as Yahweh ordered and fastened it round my loins. Then the word of Yahweh came to me again : Take the girdle you bought, which is now round your loins, and go to the Euphrates and hide it there in the crack of a rock. So I went and hid it beside the Euphrates, as Yahweh ordered. And after several days Yahweh said to me : Go to the Euphrates and take the girdle which I ordered you to hide there. So I went to the Euphrates and dug and took the girdle out of the place where I had hidden it, and, behold, it was ruined and useless. Then the word of Yahweh came to me : Thus speaks Yahweh, in the same way I mean to ruin the pride of Judah and the swollen pride of Jerusalem. This wicked people is refusing to listen to My word, and is following its own stubborn mind ; it has gone after foreign gods to serve and worship them, and so is becoming as useless as this girdle. For, as a girdle clings round a man's loins, I made Israel and Judah cling to Me, oracle of Yahweh, that they might be an honour and a praise and a glory to Me ; but they did not listen.

22. *An oracle which leaves on me the impression that it has been badly reported. Certainly its meaning, as it now stands, is very obscure.*

xiii. 12-14. Say to this people<sup>1</sup>: 'Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel: Every jar is meant to be filled with wine. And if they say to you, "Who does not know that every jar is meant to be filled with wine?" say to them: Thus speaks Yahweh: I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this country, the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets and all the citizens of Jerusalem. And you shall be dashed against each other, fathers and sons alike, oracle of Yahweh. I will not pity nor have mercy nor repent of destroying them.

23. *Three oracles belonging to Jeremiah's early period.*

(a) xiii. 15-17. A summons to attention.

Listen closely, be not insolently careless, for 'Yahweh has spoken. Give honour to Yahweh your God, before the darkness falls, before your feet stumble on the dim mountains, and you long for light, while He turns it to a thicker gloom. If you will not listen, I must weep in secret over your pride; your eyes too shall pour out tears,<sup>1</sup> because Yahweh's flock is gone into exile.

(b) xiii. 18-22. The reliance on foreign help must bring disaster.

Say to the king and queen-mother,<sup>2</sup> sit down in some humble place, for your glorious crown is falling from your heads. <sup>1</sup>The towns of the Negeb are blockaded (?) with none to open their gates; Judah is swept away in a wholesale captivity.<sup>1</sup> Look out and see the invaders from the North; where is the flock which was put under your charge, your splendid flock? What shall you say when the friends whom you yourself have taught to bully you<sup>2</sup> are lording it over you? Shall not pangs seize you, like those of a woman in child-birth? And when you ponder why these things have happened to you,

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> I have added "to bully you" in order to bring out the sense.

for the number of your sins are you exposed to dishonour and your shame laid bare to sight.

(c) xiii. 23-27. A doom on Jerusalem.

Can a negro change his skin or a panther its spotted coat ? When they can, you too [shall be able to do good, who are practised in doing evil. I will scatter them like chaff whirling before the sirocco ; this is the destiny I appoint for you, oracle of Yahweh, because you have forgotten Me and put faith in lies. I whirl your skirts over your head, and expose you to contempt [your adulteries and lewdness and vile whoredom]<sup>1</sup>. I have witnessed the infamies practised by you on the hills. Woe to you, O Jerusalem, you continue vile, and how long can this last ?

24. *Two oracles connected with a severe drought ; a description of the distress and a prayer.*

(a) xiv. 1-6. A message of Yahweh to Jeremiah in connection with drought. Judah mourns, its towns are sorrow-laden, men cower to the ground in distress, a wail rises from Jerusalem. Masters send their servants for water, but, when these reach the cisterns, they find none and return with empty jars, covering their heads in dismayed confusion. Lying untilled,<sup>2</sup> the ground is faint for want of rain ; the labourers are in dismay, covering their heads. The very hinds in the fields desert their new-born young, because there is no grass. The wild asses stand on the naked heights, panting for air,<sup>3</sup> their eyes grow dim, because every green thing has vanished.

(b) 7-9. Though our sins accuse us, act, O Yahweh, for Thine own sake. Our failures are very many ; against Thee have we sinned. Thou hope of Israel, its saviour in time of trouble, why art Thou now like a passing stranger in the land who spends a night and is gone ? Why art Thou like a man asleep,<sup>4</sup> or like one powerful indeed but impotent to save ? Yet, Yahweh,

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<sup>1</sup> Probably a vehement addition.

<sup>2</sup> Emended text.

<sup>3</sup> With LXX omit "like a crocodile."

<sup>4</sup> So with LXX.



Thou dwellest among us, and it is Thy name we bear ; forsake us not.

25. *A fragment.*

xiv. 10. Thus speaks Yahweh to this people : They love to wander, setting no restraint on their feet. Yahweh has no pleasure in them ; now He is about to remember their sins, and punish their wicked deeds.

26. *Against certain prophets who denied the coming of Yahweh in judgment.*

(a) xiv. 11-16. Yahweh said to me : You shall not pray for this people. When they fast, I will not listen to their petition, when they offer burnt offering and sacrifice, I will not accept them, for I am about to destroy them by sword, famine and pestilence. Then I said : Ah, Yahweh my Lord, there are prophets who tell them, you will never see a sword, never have famine, for I mean to give you in this place a settled peace. But Yahweh answered : The prophets are prophesying lies in My name. I never sent them, nor gave them any charge nor spoke to them. What they prophesy is false visions, empty superstitions and the fancies of their own minds. Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh about the prophets who prophesy in My name but whom I did not send, and who are saying that neither sword nor famine shall befall this country, they themselves shall be cut off by sword and famine ; and the people to whom they prophesy shall be flung out in the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword, with no one to bury either them or their wives, their sons or daughters, and I will pour out disaster upon them.

(b) xiv. 17-18. A fragment of a lament over ruined Judah.

Speak to them as follows : My eyes stream with tears day and night without ceasing, because my people is hurt to the death with a mortal wound. If I go out into the open country, lo, the dead pierced by the sword ; if I enter the city, lo, the horrors of famine. Prophet and priest are, alike, bowed to the ground . . .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The last clause has been emended.

27. *Three oracles of late date, when Judah has already gone into exile.*

(a) xiv. 19-22. A humble confession and plea to Yahweh.

Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah and cast off Zion ? Why hast Thou smitten us with an incurable wound ? We expected peace, but in vain, we looked for a time of healing, and terror came. We acknowledge, O Yahweh, our guilt, the crime of our fathers, how we have sinned against Thee. For Thine own sake do not reject us, do not discredit Thy glorious throne, remember instead of breaking off Thy covenant with us. Can any of the idols of the heathen bring rain or can the heavens send down showers ? Is it not Thou, O Yahweh our God, on whom we can rely, because Thou canst do such things as these ?

(b) xv. 1-4. Another voice from the exile which seeks a reason for the national calamities.

Yahweh said to me : Though Moses or Samuel should stand before Me, I could not regard this people with favour ; drive them from My presence and let them go. And when they say to you : Whither are we to go ? say to them : Thus speaks Yahweh : Those who are appointed to death, shall go to death, those appointed to the sword, to the sword, those appointed to famine, to famine, those appointed to captivity, to captivity. I mean to allot to them four fates, the sword to kill, dogs to tear, birds and beasts to devour and destroy, and I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the world because of what Manasseh ben Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.

(c) xv. 5-9. A lament over desolate Jerusalem.

Who has pity upon you, O Jerusalem, who will comfort you, or who turns aside to ask how you fare ? You rejected Me, oracle of Yahweh, continually rebelling. So I lifted My hand against you to destroy ; My pity was worn out. I winnowed them out among the towns of the land, I bereaved them of their children. I destroyed My people <sup>1</sup>because of the vileness of their ways.<sup>1</sup> Their widows<sup>2</sup> are more numerous than sea-

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<sup>1</sup> Emended text after LXX.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX.

sand. I led against them the destroyer in full day,<sup>1</sup> I brought down upon them terror and dismay. The prolific mother is struck down, she sighs out her life, her sun has set in clear day, she is put to shame and consternation, all who are left to her I will deliver over to the sword before their enemies, oracle of Yahweh.

28. *Two outcries from Jeremiah, as he ponders over his vocation, with the divine answer.*

- (a) xv. 10, 11. A fragment, unhappily with most uncertain text. I cannot pretend that the version of v. 11 offered is more than an attempt.

Alas, my mother, that you ever bore me to be at odds with, and in opposition to, the whole world. I have neither borrowed nor lent money, yet everyone curses me. Yahweh replied: Be sure that I strengthen you for good; be sure that I will yet bring the enemy a suppliant in the day of trial and sorrow.

v. 12 I can neither translate nor understand.

vv. 13-14 recur in xvii. 3, 4, where they are much more in place.

- (b) xv. 15-21. Alone against the world.

<sup>2</sup>O Yahweh, remember me and give me some heed, avenge my cause on those who persecute me; delay not Thine anger, recognise that I am bearing insult and <sup>3</sup>reproach from men who despise Thy words.<sup>3</sup> As for me, Thy word is my joy and my heart's delight, for I am wholly dedicated to Thee, O Yahweh. I never sat in the company of mockers nor found any pleasure there; under Thine awful power I sat lonely for Thou didst fill me with indignation. Why then is my grief unceasing and my wound incurable? Art Thou becoming to me a stream that runs dry, a spring that fails?

Thus, then, spoke Yahweh: If you surrender to Me and I restore you, you shall be My servant: if you make clear the difference between good and evil, you shall be like My mouth. Then it will be for others to turn to you, not for you to turn to them. Among this people I will make you a mighty wall

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<sup>1</sup> Omitting three Hebrew words, which defy construction.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX, omit "Thou knowest" from the beginning of the verse.

<sup>3</sup> Following LXX.

of bronze ; they may fight against you, but they shall never have the mastery, for I am on your side to deliver you, oracle of Yahweh. And I will deliver you out of the power of bad men, and free you from the strength of oppressors.

29. *In his vocation, Jeremiah must remain unmarried and separate from the common life of men. Marriage was a blessing from God in Israel, and Judaism is the only great faith which has never favoured the moral suicide that bred the monk and nun.*

xvi. 1-9. The word of Yahweh came to me : You must remain unmarried and childless in this place. For thus speaks Yahweh about the children born here, about the mothers who bear them and the fathers who beget them in this land. They shall die a cruel death, remaining unmourned and unburied ; they shall lie like dung on the open fields, ravaged by sword and famine ; their carcasses shall become food for the birds and beasts of prey.

Thus speaks Yahweh : You must not enter a house of mourning ; it is not for you to mourn and wail over this people, for I have withdrawn My peace from them.<sup>1</sup> Great and humble shall die alike in this land and be unburied, unwept, unhonoured, unmourned. No one shall break the mourners' bread over them, to bring comfort for the dead ; no one shall reach out the cup of consolation for father or mother. You must not enter a house of feasting to take part with other men in eating and drinking. For thus speaks Yahweh God of Israel : In your sight and in your lifetime I am about to bring to an end in this place the sound of joy and gladness, the voice of bridegroom and bride.

30. *The priests explain to the exiles why the exile has befallen them.*

xvi. 10-21. When you expound all these matters to this people, and they say to you : Why did Yahweh denounce all this terrific disaster against us, and what is our transgression and what our sin, which we have committed against Yahweh our God, you must say to them : It is because your fathers forsook

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<sup>1</sup> MT has a few superfluous words, omitted by LXX.

Me, oracle of Yahweh, in following, serving and worshipping strange gods, and forsook Me, in failing to keep My law. And as for you, you have behaved worse than your fathers, and every man among you is following his own stubborn and wicked mind, refusing to listen to Me. So I will hurl you out of this land into a land which neither you nor your fathers knew and there you shall serve continually strange gods which shall show<sup>2</sup> you no grace . . .<sup>1</sup> I am sending for several fishers, oracle of Yahweh, who shall catch them, and afterwards for several hunters, who shall hunt them from every mountain and hill and even from the rock-caves. For I keep watch over their conduct, it cannot be hidden from Me, nor can their iniquity remain hidden from My sight ; and I will repay<sup>2</sup> their iniquity and sin because they desecrated My land with their dead and vile gods and filled My inheritance with their abominations.

[Yahweh, my strength, my defence, my refuge in every day of distress, from the remotest parts of the world nations shall come to Thee and say : Our fathers received by tradition nothing but lies, empty and worthless superstition. Can a man make God ? Such things are not God.]<sup>3</sup>

Therefore at this time I will make them acknowledge My mighty power ; they shall learn that My name is Yahweh.

31. *If by Jeremiah, this must be an early oracle, directed against the popular worship ; it is omitted by the LXX.*

xvii. 1-4. The sin of Judah is chiselled with an iron point, engraved with a diamond on their heart's core ; it appears on the horns of their altars, <sup>4</sup>the stone pillars, the asheras, the spreading trees, the heights of the plain.<sup>4</sup> I will hand over to pillage your property, even all your treasures,<sup>4</sup> because of the sin which is committed throughout your territory. You shall lose your hold on the land I gave you, and I will make you slaves to your enemies in an unknown land, for you have roused the blaze of My anger, and it shall never be put out.

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<sup>1</sup> Vv. 14, 15 appear again at xxiii. 7, 8, where they seem more in place.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX.

<sup>3</sup> Two verses, which have probably been inserted here by some pious reader, but which have nothing to do with the context.

<sup>4</sup> Emended with help of the Syriac ; but an obscure text.

32. *A short psalm of the same character and probably of the same period as the first psalm in the Psalter.*

xvii. 5-8. Thus speaks Yahweh: Cursed be he who puts his trust in man, who takes mere flesh as his support, and who turns his thoughts away from Yahweh. He is like scrub in the steppes; if good comes, it does not see it, living, as it does, in a waste wilderness, a barren and solitary land. Blessed be he who puts his trust in Yahweh, relying absolutely on Him. He is like a tree planted beside water, sending out its roots to the stream, which needs fear no heat, the leaves of which remain ever fresh. In a year of drought it remains untroubled, never ceasing to bear fruit.

33. *Three short, late sayings.*

(a) and (b). Two gnomic sentences, like the collection found in Proverbs or Ecclesiastes.

(a) xvii. 9-10. The mind of man is more secretive than all else and is set on evil; who can fathom it? I, Yahweh, test the mind and try the heart, appointing to every man according to his conduct and according to the outcome of his work.

(b) xvii. 11. A partridge hatches out eggs which it has not itself laid<sup>1</sup>; a man amasses gain by base means, only to lose it in the middle of his life, and in the end stands a fool confessed.

(c) xvii. 12, 13. Probably the pious, glad utterance of many a pilgrim to the restored Jerusalem.

Ah, glorious throne, high-pitched, venerable, our holy sanctuary! Yahweh, Thou hope of Israel, all who forsake Thee shall be disappointed, all <sup>2</sup>who rebel against Thee in the land shall be brought to shame,<sup>2</sup> because they have forsaken Yahweh, the well of living water.

34. *A prayer for patience and for divine vindication, which may be of any period.*

xvii. 14-18. Heal me, O Yahweh, so that I may be made whole, save me, so that I may indeed be saved, for Thou art my glory. There are some who say to me—where is Yahweh's word? Let it arrive. Yet I have not urged <sup>2</sup>Thee to hasten the disaster,<sup>2</sup> and Thou knowest well that I have not longed

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<sup>1</sup> With the result that the young forsake their false mother.

<sup>2</sup> An emended text.

for the evil day. What I did say is clearly known to Thee. Be not Thou the author of my ruin, Thou, my refuge in every evil day. Let my persecutors be put to shame instead of me, let them be in dismay instead of me, bring upon them the evil day, their utter ruin.

35. *A piece of legislation, belonging to the period when the religious community at Jerusalem was reconstituted after the exile; cf. Neh. xiii. 15-22.*

xvii. 19-27. Thus Yahweh said to me: Go and stand at the gate of the children of your people,<sup>1</sup> by which the kings of Judah enter and go out, and at all the gates of Jerusalem, and say to them: Listen to Yahweh's word, you kings of Judah, men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem who enter by these gates. Thus speaks Yahweh, for the sake of your lives avoid carrying wares on the Sabbath and bringing them through Jerusalem's gates. Bring no wares out of your houses and do no work on the Sabbath. You must keep the Sabbath holy, as I commanded your fathers. They, however, did not listen or pay any attention, indeed they obstinately refused to listen or to take warning. But if you listen, oracle of Yahweh, and bring no wares through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, and if you keep the Sabbath holy, by doing no work in it, there will enter through the gates of this city kings<sup>2</sup> occupying David's throne, riding on chariots and horses, and along with them their officers, the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem; and this city shall be inhabited for ever. And out of the towns of Judah and the environs of Jerusalem, out of the land of Benjamin and the maritime plain, out of the hill-country and the Negeb, men shall come bringing burnt-offering and peace-offering, meal-offering and incense, bringing too, thank-offering to the temple. But if you do not listen to Me, as to keeping the Sabbath holy and refraining from carrying wares through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath, I will kindle an unquenchable fire in the city gates which shall consume Jerusalem's palaces.

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<sup>1</sup> So the LXX, meaning perhaps "the gate of Benjamin," cf. xxxvii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Omit princes; they did not sit on David's throne.



36. *Jeremiah at the potter's workshop. No special shape, such as the Kingdom, is essential to the nation as Yahweh's instrument.*

xviii. 1-6. The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah. Rise and go down to the potter's workshop, and there I will reveal a message to you. So I went down to the potter's workshop and found him at work with his wheel. Whenever the article he was making went wrong, as clay is apt to do in a potter's hand, he would remake it in a different shape, such as he thought suitable. Thereupon the message of Yahweh came to me: Am I not able to act towards you, O Israel,<sup>1</sup> like this potter? You are in My hands, as clay is in the hands of the potter.

(a) xviii. 7-12. Comment, and not very happy comment, on the preceding. It makes Yahweh's change of purpose depend on the change of mind in the article He is fashioning. Now the one point at which the parable fails is that clay cannot change its mind.

At one time I may issue a decree against a nation or kingdom to tear up, dash down and destroy. But, if that nation against which I have decreed repent of its wickedness, I will repent of the calamity which I have resolved to bring upon it. At another time I may issue a decree against a nation or kingdom to build up and to plant. But, if it should do evil before Me by not listening to My voice, I will repent of the benefit I planned to confer on it. Say, therefore, to the men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem: Thus speaks Yahweh, I am planning calamity for you and forming a design against you. Let every man repent of his wicked conduct and set right his ways and deeds. But they will say: It is all useless, for we mean to follow our own plans and act according to our own stubborn mind.

37. *An oracle of disaster.*

xviii. 13-17. Thus speaks Yahweh: Inquire among the nations whether anyone has heard of such a deed as the abominable thing Israel has done. Does the snow disappear from the crest of Lebanon, or do the waters fail from the Mediterranean?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit "oracle of Yahweh."

<sup>2</sup> All students agree as to the *sense* of the verse, but they also vary as to the text. The above translation is based on Cornill.

Yet My people have forgotten Me and sacrifice to idols, hence they have stumbled in their ways,<sup>1</sup> walking in an ill-made path, making their land a waste and an object of perpetual scorn, so that every one who passes that way is horrified and shakes his head. Like a sirocco I will scatter them before the enemy, and turn My back instead of My face to them in the day of their disaster.

38. *A prayer by Jeremiah, when troubled by the opposition of certain enemies. Probably added to. Note how verses 21, 22a break the connection of thought.*

xviii. 18-23. They said: Come, let us lay a plan against Jeremiah, for the priest is not without a law nor the wise man without counsel, nor the prophet without a divine<sup>2</sup> word; come then, let us get the better of him by the tongue and give<sup>3</sup> close attention to all he says. Give me Thy close attention, O Yahweh, listen to the words of my opponents. Is good to be repaid with evil, that they have dug a pit for my life? Remember how I presented myself before Thee to plead in their favour and to turn back Thine anger from them. Therefore deliver over their children to famine and commit them to the power of the sword, let their wives become childless and widows, their men being slaughtered, their young men slain in war. Let a wail go up from their homes, when Thou suddenly bringest brigands against them. They dug a pit to catch me, they laid hidden snares for my feet. But Thou, O Yahweh, knowest all their deadly plan against me; pardon not their iniquity, nor blot their sin out of Thy sight; make them stumble and counteract them in the day of Thine anger.

39. *Jeremiah's symbolic act in breaking a jar. The passage is greatly overladen. Probably the original was as simple and as brief as the incident with the potter, and verses 10-12 may represent this original nucleus.*

xix. 1-15. Thus speaks Yahweh: Go and buy an earthenware jar and take with you some of the leading laymen and priests.

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<sup>1</sup> Emended text.

<sup>2</sup> I have added "divine."

<sup>3</sup> With LXX omit "not."

Then go out into the valley of Ben Hinnom at the pottery gate and utter the message which I will reveal to you. Say : Listen to the word of Yahweh, you kings of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem : Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel, I am about to bring disaster on this place, a disaster which will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle, because they have deserted Me and desecrated this place by sacrificing in it to strange gods unknown to them and their fathers, and because the kings of Judah<sup>1</sup> have filled this place with the blood of innocent persons, and have built high places to Baal for burning their children in sacrifice, a thing which I never ordered, nor mentioned, which never entered My mind. Therefore days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when this place shall no longer be called Tophet or valley of Ben Hinnom, but valley of butchery. I will wreck the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place and will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies through the power of those who seek their life, and I will make their carcasses food for the birds and beasts of prey. I will make this city in its desolateness an object of scorn so that every casual passer-by shall whistle with amazement at its ruin, and I will make the men eat the flesh of their children ; men shall eat each other through the horror of the close siege with which their enemies seeking their life shall shut them up.

Then break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you, and say to them, thus speaks Yahweh : I mean to smash this people and this city as a man breaks an earthenware jar which cannot be pieced together again.<sup>2</sup> For I mean to act thus toward this place and toward its inhabitants, and to make this city like Tophet,<sup>3</sup> oracle of Yahweh. And the houses of Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah, on the roofs of which men sacrificed to the host of heaven and poured libation to strange gods, shall, like Tophet, be unclean.

So Jeremiah came from Tophet to which Yahweh sent him to prophesy, and stood in the court of the temple and said to all the people : Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth God of Israel : I mean to bring on this city with its dependent towns all the

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> Omit last clause with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> Compare 2 Kings xxiii. 10.

disaster which I announced against it, because men obstinately refused to listen to My words.

40. *Pashhur arrests Jeremiah and receives the prophet's denunciation.*

xx. 1-6. Now Pashhur ben Immer the priest, who was chief overseer in the temple, heard Jeremiah when he was uttering this prophecy. So he arrested Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks at the upper Benjamin gate, beside the temple. When on the following day Pashhur freed him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him : Yahweh has changed your name from Pashhur into Magor-missabib [terror on every side]. For thus speaks Yahweh : I will hand over to terror you and your friends ; they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, while you must look on ; all Judah, too, I will deliver into the power of the king of Babylon and he shall take them into captivity in Babylon and slaughter them. And I will hand over every valuable thing in this city, and every precious thing, as well as the treasures of the kings of Judah into the power of their enemies, so that they, spoiling at their will, seize and bring them to Babylon. As for you and all your kindred, you shall go into captivity, and, coming to Babylon, shall die and be buried there—both you and all your friends to whom you caused lies to be prophesied.

41. *Two personal utterances. In the first Jeremiah, in his loneliness, comforts himself in God. In the second he utters a cry of most bitter distress. Though they are placed together in our text, it is unnecessary to suppose that they were uttered at the same time. They reproduce different spiritual moods of the prophet.*

(a) xx. 7-13. Thou, O Yahweh, hast 'led me where Thou wilt, and I let myself be led ; Thou wast too strong for me, and hast had Thy way. So I have become a constant laughing-stock, the derision of all. Whenever I prophesy, I have reason to cry "violence and wrong,"<sup>1</sup> for Yahweh's word has brought me persistent insult and outrage. But if I say : I will give it all up and never again speak in His name, the message becomes like

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<sup>1</sup> Compare vi. 7.

a fire, blazing and scorching within me. I am weary of enduring this, so weary that I can bear no more. For I hear the whisper of the crowd, "He and his terror on every side! Let us denounce him"; the whisper of those who were my friends, "Perhaps he may make a false step, then we shall get the better of him and have our revenge." But Yahweh gives me a hero's vigour; therefore my persecutors shall fail to work their will. They shall be bitterly ashamed over their failure, which to them is a constant disgrace, never to be forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

(b) xx. 14-18. Cursed be the day on which I was born; may no blessing rest on the day when my mother bore me! Cursed be he who brought the news to my father, "a son is born to you," congratulating him! May the fate of that man be the fate of the towns which Yahweh pitilessly overthrew. May he hear a cry at dawn, a battle-shout at noon-day. Because men did not kill me in my mother's womb, and make my mother my grave, making my mother go with her unborn child to the grave.<sup>2</sup> Why did I ever come from the womb, only to see weariness and toil, and spend my days in shame?

42. *The reply of Jeremiah to a message of king Zedekiah, who consulted the prophet as to the fate of Jerusalem in the war with Babylon. The section is related to c. 38, as c. 7 is to c. 26. The present passage gives Jeremiah's message in larger form; the later passage shows the relation of the message to the prophet's life and fate.*

xxi. 1-10. The message from Yahweh to Jeremiah when king Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur ben Melchiah and Zephaniah ben Maaseiah the priest to say: Consult Yahweh for us, for Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, is at war with us; and learn whether Yahweh will renew His great deeds on our behalf, so that the enemy may withdraw.

Jeremiah said to them: This is the reply you must make to Zedekiah. Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel: I will make useless the weapons you are using against the king of Babylon

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<sup>1</sup> V. 12 is repeated from xi. 20, where it is more appropriate. V. 13 is an intruded verse of a Psalm, "Sing to Yahweh, Hallelujah, because He has saved the life of the poor out of the power of bad men."

<sup>2</sup> MT has been slightly emended.

and the Chaldeans who are besieging you, and I will bring these men-inside this city. I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, in fury, anger and fierce rage; and I will strike down the inhabitants of this city, man and beast, through a terrible pestilence they shall die. Afterwards, oracle of Yahweh, I will hand over Zedekiah, king of Judah, with his servants and all in this city who survive the pestilence, sword and famine, into the power of their enemies who seek their life and they shall strike them down unsparingly, giving no quarter; nor will I show them any pity.<sup>1</sup>

Say also to this people, thus speaks Yahweh: I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. All who remain in this city shall die by the sword, famine, or pestilence; but all who go out and surrender to the Chaldeans who are besieging you, shall at least succeed in saving their lives. For I have resolved evil and not good against this city. Oracle of Yahweh. It shall be handed over into the power of the king of Babylon, and burned down.

43. *An oracle addressed to the court. It should be read along with chapter 22, e.g., after xxii. 6.*

xxi. 11, 12. To the courtiers of Judah.

Listen to Yahweh's message, you who belong to David's house. Thus speaks Yahweh:

Show yourselves diligent and impartial judges, deliver the wronged from the power of the oppressor. Otherwise, on account of your vile deeds, My anger will blaze up like fire, and burn unquenchably.

44. *A denunciation of some unknown town, clearly not Jerusalem; of quite uncertain origin.*

xxi. 13-14. I am against you, dweller in the ravine, rock on the table-land, who boast, "Who can ever reach us,<sup>2</sup> or penetrate into our haunts?" oracle of Yahweh. I will punish you according to the outcome of your deeds, oracle of Yahweh, and will kindle a fire in your forest which shall devour everything round it.

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<sup>1</sup> Following LXX.

<sup>2</sup> So with Syr.

45. *A series of oracles which, with one exception, are concerned with the kings of Jeremiah's period and their court.*

(a) xxii. 1-5. Warning to the King and Court.

Thus speaks Yahweh :

Go down to the palace and deliver there this message. Listen to Yahweh's word, thou king of Judah, occupant of David's throne, thou and thy servants, and thy people who enter at these gates. Thus speaks Yahweh : Do strict and impartial justice, deliver the wronged from the power of the oppressor, do not maltreat or annoy the foreigner, fatherless or widow, do not shed innocent blood in this place. For, if you so act, there will continue to enter through the palace gates kings occupying David's throne, riding on chariots and horses, as well as their servants and people. If, however, you do not listen to this message, I swear by myself, oracle of Yahweh, that this palace shall become a ruin.

(b) xxii. 6, 7.

Thus speaks Yahweh against the court of Judah : You were to Me a Gilead, a very Mount Lebanon. But I swear to make you a desert, an uninhabited city. I am preparing against you men equipped for destruction, who shall fell for burning your finest cedars.

(b) xxii. 8, 9. A later prosaic commentary.

Many peoples, when they pass this city, shall say to one another : Why did Yahweh treat in such a fashion this great city ? They shall have for answer : because they forsook the covenant of Yahweh their God and worshipped and served strange gods.

(c) xxii. 10-12. An oracle on Josiah the dead, and Jehoahaz the exiled, kings.

Thus speaks Yahweh about Shallum ben Josiah, who succeeded his father Josiah : Weep not nor mourn for him who is dead ; weep bitterly for him who is going away, for he shall never return to see his native land. Once he has left this place, he shall never return to it, but shall die in the place to which he has been exiled, and shall never see this country again.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The verses have been re-arranged.



(d) xxii. 13-17. An oracle on Jehoahaz.

Woe to him who builds his palace on injustice and its rooms on unrighteousness, who makes his fellow-man toil for him and does not pay him for his work, who thinks: I will build myself a spacious palace with fine rooms and wide windows, wainscoted with cedar and painted with scarlet.<sup>1</sup> Are you really a king, because you worry over cedar?<sup>2</sup> Did not your father eat and drink, act justly and uprightly,<sup>3</sup> show justice to the humble and the poor? Then it went well with him; so to live was to know Me, oracle of Yahweh.

(e) xxii. 18, 19. An oracle on Jehoiakim.

Thus speaks Yahweh about Jehoiakim ben Josiah, king of Judah: No one shall lament over him as men mourn over their near kin, no one shall lament over him as men lament over their lords. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, dragged along and flung down outside the gates of Jerusalem.

(f) xxii. 20-23. An oracle against some unknown nation or city, apparently belonging to the district East of Jordan. It is out of place here.

Climb into Lebanon and cry aloud, into Bashan and make your voice heard; wail from Abarim, for all your allies are ruined. I spoke to you in your prosperity, you said: "I will not listen"; it has been your habit from your childhood not to listen to Me. The wind drives at its will your leaders, and your allies go into exile; then you have reason to be ashamed and disappointed over your friends.<sup>4</sup> You, who live at ease in Lebanon and make your nest among the cedars, what groaning you shall know when pangs like those of a woman in childbed befall you.

(g) xxii. 24-27. An oracle on the fate of Jehoiachin.

By my life, oracle of Yahweh, though Coniah ben Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were a signet-ring on My right hand, I should tear

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the words here are uncertain, but the general sense is clear.

<sup>2</sup> Or, "are you really proved a king, because you rival other people in cedar?"

<sup>3</sup> With LXX omit "then it was well with him."

<sup>4</sup> With LXX.

you off. I will deliver you into the power of those who seek your life, before whom he is afraid, even into the power of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon and the Chaldeans, and I will fling you and the mother who bore you into an unknown land, and there you shall die, and they shall never return to the land on returning to which they are setting their hearts.

(b) xxii. 28-30. Two fragments on the same king.

Is this man Coniah an article contemptible and flung aside, something in which no one takes any pleasure? Why are he and his family expelled and flung out into an unknown land?

Earth, earth, earth, listen to the message of Yahweh.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Pronounce this man childless and ineffective all his life-time, for no one of his race shall ever succeed to the authority of David nor continue to reign over Judah.

(i) xxiii. 1-2. An oracle against the leaders of the people.

Ah! the shepherds who ruin and scatter the flock of My pasture, oracle of Yahweh.

Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel, about the shepherds of my people: You have scattered My flock and led them astray, you have taken no care of them. I will take care of you according to your mischievous deeds. Oracle of Yahweh.

(j) xxiii. 3, 4. A post-exilic addition.

And I will gather what is left of My flock out of all the countries to which I have scattered them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall increase abundantly, and I will appoint over them shepherds to feed them, and they shall be fearless, untroubled and unharassed. Oracle of Yahweh.

46. *Two oracles of restoration, one containing a promise of Messiah. Opinion is greatly divided as to whether these belong to Jeremiah. It is an interesting fact that both oracles appear elsewhere, (a) recurring at xxxiii, 15, 16, and (b) at xvi. 14, 15. They stand isolated here between the oracles on the rulers and those on the prophets of Judah.*

(a) xxiii. 5, 6. Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will raise up for David a righteous shoot, and a king shall reign

with good success, maintaining justice and right in the country. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel live in security; and this shall be his name—Yahweh is our righteousness.

(b) xxiii. 7, 8. Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when men shall give up taking oath by Yahweh who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Instead they shall swear by Yahweh who brought all Israel out of the North country and out of all the lands to which I scattered them, and who settled them in their own land.

47. *A series of oracles on the prophets, which show how seriously Jeremiah thought on the perennial question of inspiration.*

(a) xxiii. 9-12. Israel's spiritual leaders are to be punished with judicial blindness because of their wrong-doing.

On the subject of the prophets. On account of Yahweh and His holy words, my mind is confused. I tremble in every limb, I have become like a drunk man, mastered by wine. For the country is full of [profane men<sup>1</sup>][for, being cursed the land mourns, the open meadows are parched],<sup>2</sup> whose behaviour is vile and who are strong for evil. Prophet and priest are alike impious, even in the temple<sup>3</sup> I have found their villainy, oracle of Yahweh. Therefore their road shall be like a tortuous path among dark shadows, along which they shall be thrust to their fall, when I bring upon them a disaster, even the year of their visitation. Oracle of Yahweh.

(b) xxiii. 13-15. Prophets of evil life can only harden men in evil.

Among the prophets of Samaria I found madness; they prophesied in the name of Baal and misled My people Israel. Among the prophets of Jerusalem also I have found a horrible thing, apostasy and hypocrisy combined; they support bad men, so that no man feels the need to repent of his sin. They are all to Me no better than Sodom, and the citizens of Jerusalem are no better than Gomorrah. Because from Jerusalem's

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<sup>1</sup> Literally "adulterers."

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is probably an addition; it hopelessly breaks the connection.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., "house of Yahweh" instead of "my house." The prophet is speaking.

prophets a taint has spread to the whole country, thus speaks Yahweh : I will feed them with wormwood and make them drink poison.

(c) xxiii. 16-22. True prophecy deals first with the conscience of men.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth : Do not listen to the messages of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They befool you, uttering a vision of their own mind, but nothing from the mouth of Yahweh. They tell men who despise Yahweh's word, "you shall be all right," and to men who follow their own stubborn minds they say : "no harm shall come to you." But any one who has stood in Yahweh's council must listen with awe ; who has attended to and heard His word otherwise ? See, the stormwind of Yahweh is abroad, the tempest rises and whirls, it bursts on the head of sinful men. The fury of Yahweh never grows calm till its work is done in fulfilling His purposes. In the consummation of all things you will find this true.<sup>1</sup>

I never sent the prophets, but they ran ; I never spoke to them, but they prophesied. If they had stood in My council, and heard My words, they would have made My people repent of their evil conduct and vile deeds.

(d) xxiii. 23, 24. The all-seeing eye.

Am I only a God of a little vision, and not a God with width of sight ? Is a man able to hide himself so that I cannot see him ? Do not I fill heaven and earth ? Oracle of Yahweh.

(e) xxiii. 25-29. Lower and higher methods of revelation.

I have heard the talk of the prophets who utter lies in My name, saying, "I have dreamed a dream." With their dreams which men tell each other, how long will it be in the mind of the prophets who utter lies and their own false imaginations, till they make My people forget My name as their fathers forgot My name for that of Baal ? Let the prophet who has had a dream relate it, and let him who has My word declare it sincerely ; but why mix chaff with wheat ? Oracle of Yahweh.

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<sup>1</sup> Most commentators regard vv. 18-20 as secondary material. Verses 19-20 reappear at xxx. 23, 24, but in a singularly isolated position. I cannot claim for the above rendering that it is certain.

Is not My word like fire, oracle of Yahweh, or like a hammer smashing a rock ?

(f) xxiii. 30-32. Short oracles against certain types of prophets.

I am against the prophets who steal My messages from one another, oracle of Yahweh, I am against the prophets who copy My language, and are constantly saying "thus speaks." Oracle of Yahweh.

I am against the prophets who deal in false dreams, oracle of Yahweh, and who, relating them, mislead My people by their lies and nonsense. I never gave them authority or command, and they are of no use to this people.

(g) xxiii. 33. An utterance of Jeremiah which has had a curious fate. The Hebrew word for burden has the same double sense as our word. It means "load," but it is also used, somewhat like our "burden" of a song, for an oracle from Yahweh. Jeremiah used the double sense of the word for a punning rebuke to his fellow-men. When anyone comes inquiring for the burden, or oracle of Yahweh, reply that you are the burden or load on Yahweh. The verses which follow are a series of efforts by somewhat stolid commentators to explain his meaning.

When anyone, layman, prophet or priest, asks you : "What is the burden of Yahweh ?" say to them : "You are the burden,<sup>1</sup> but I mean to throw you off." Oracle of Yahweh.

(1) xxiii. 34, 35.

If the prophet, priest or layman talks of "the burden of Yahweh," I will punish that man and his household. This is the expression you must use in public and in private : "What has Yahweh answered ?" or "What has Yahweh said ?"

(2) xxiii. 36, 37.

Never again recall the expression, "burden of Yahweh," for how can His word be a burden to any man ?<sup>2</sup> This is how you must address a prophet : "How did Yahweh answer you ?" or "What has Yahweh said ?"

(3) xxiii. 38-40.

But, if you say "burden of Yahweh," thus speaks Yahweh : Because you have used the phrase "burden of Yahweh," though

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX.

<sup>2</sup> Omit with LXX the second half of verse 36 ; it is unintelligible in the connection.

I expressly forbade you, I will take you up like a burden and cast out of My sight you and the city which I gave to you and your fathers. And I will lay upon you an enduring reproach and an insult which shall never be forgotten.

48. *Jeremiah compares the exiles to good figs, the people of Jerusalem to bad figs. The oracle has been somewhat overlaid with later material.*

xxiv. After Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had led away as captives to Babylon Jechoniah ben Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the leading men of Judah with the artisans and smiths from Jerusalem, Yahweh showed me two baskets of figs set out in front of the temple. One basket held very good figs like those of the first crop; the other held very bad figs, so bad as to be uneatable. Then Yahweh said to me: What is it you see, Jeremiah? And I said: Figs, the good figs excellent, the bad so bad as to be uneatable. Then the word of Yahweh came to me: Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel: Like these good figs, I approve exiled Judah, whom I sent away from this place to Chaldea; and I will show them favour and restore them to this country, and build them up instead of ruining them. I will plant instead of tearing them up, and I will give them a mind to know Me, how I am Yahweh, and they shall be My people and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with undivided mind. But, as one deals with figs so bad as to be uneatable, so, thus speaks Yahweh, will I treat Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his officers and the men of Judah who are left in this country and those who live in Egypt. I will make them an object of disgust to all the kingdoms of the world, a reproach and proverb, taunt and curse in all the places to which I mean to scatter them. I will send among them sword, famine and pestilence till they are destroyed from the country which I gave to them and to their fathers.

49. *An apocalyptic vision of the end. This was a subject which fascinated the later Judaism. On the details and accompaniments of this judgment they spent much time and thought. Hence this picture has been greatly elaborated. I have ventured to mark with square brackets the passages which seem unquestionably late, but it is difficult to decide what was the original.*

xxv. 1-29. The message which came to Jeremiah about the whole nation of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim ben Josiah king of Judah, or the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon [which Jeremiah the prophet uttered about the whole nation of Judah and all the citizens of Jerusalem, saying: From the thirteenth year of Josiah ben Amon king of Judah until now, during twenty-three years the word of Yahweh has been coming to me and I uttered it patiently, but you did not listen. Yahweh had already patiently sent all His servants the prophets, but you did not listen or pay any attention. His message was: Let every man repent of his evil conduct and bad deeds, and live in the land which Yahweh gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever. And do not follow strange gods to serve and worship them and do not irritate Me by your acts to do you harm. But you did not listen to Me, oracle of Yahweh, instead you did irritate Me by your acts to do you harm. Therefore thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth: because you did not listen to Me.]

Behold, I am sending and taking all the families of the North [oracle of Yahweh, and to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, my servant]<sup>1</sup> and I will bring them against this country and against its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations, and I will devote them to ruin and make them an object of horror and derision and an eternal desolation. And I will bring to an end among them the voice of joy and gladness, the song of the bridegroom and bride, the sound of millstones and the light of a lamp; and all the earth shall lie desolate [and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years].<sup>2</sup>

[And when the seventy years have run their course, I will punish for their sin the king of Babylon and that nation, oracle of Yahweh, and Chaldea, and I will make it an enduring waste. And I will bring upon this country all My messages against it, even everything which is written in this book of Jeremiah's prophecies against all the nations. Because many nations enslaved them, I will pay these back in full for their deeds and conduct.]

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<sup>1</sup> The bracketed words are absent from LXX, and are patently in hopeless grammar.

<sup>2</sup> The curious variation of LXX makes it clear that this also is an addition.



Thus spoke Yahweh God of Israel to me : Take this cup of wine from My hand and make all the nations to which I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and reel before the sword which I am sending among them.

[So I took the cup out of Yahweh's hand and made all the nations to which He sent me drink, even Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and leading men, to turn them into a desolation, and object of horror, derision and execration, as they are now, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, with his servants, his officers and all his people, and all the Ere<sup>1</sup>, and all the kings of Uz and of Philistia, Ascalon and Gaza, Ekron and what is left of Ashdod, Edom, Moab and Ammon, all the kings of Tyre and of Sidon, and the kings of the Mediterranean coast, Dedan, Tema, Buz and the crop-haired tribes, all the kings of the Arabs who live in the desert, all the kings of Zimri, of Elam and of Media, all the kings of the North, both distant and near, and all the Kingdoms of the earth which are on the face of the ground ; and after them the king of Babylon shall drink.]

And say to them : Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth God of Israel : Drink even to drunken nausea and fall never to rise again on account of the sword which I am sending among you. And when they refuse to take the cup from your hand, say to them : Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth : Ye shall drink, for in this city which is specially dedicated to Me I am beginning to work hurt, and are you to be held innocent and immune ? You shall not be held innocent and immune, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the world. Oracle of Yahweh Tsebaoth.

50. *Several fragments of apocalypse have been added to the longer one.*

xxv. 30-38. Prophecy to them all these words and say : Yahweh roars from on high and thunders from His holy abode ; He roars against His fold, utters a vintage-shout, like one who treads the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. Havoc has reached from end to end of the world, for Yahweh asserts His right over the nations. He is vindicating His claim among

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<sup>1</sup> Apparently some part of the population of Egypt.

mankind ; He has handed over sinners to the sword. Oracle of Yahweh.

Thus speaks Yahweh : Ruin spreads from nation to nation, a vast storm-cloud rises from the ends of the earth.

In that day Yahweh's victims shall cover the earth from one end to the other, lying unmourned, ungathered, unburied, dung on the earth's face.

Wail and cry, O shepherds ; lie prostrate in the dust, you lords of the flocks, for the days are ripe for your slaughter and you shall fall like choice lambs<sup>1</sup> ; there is no refuge left for the shepherds, no security for the lords of the flocks. Hark, the cry of the shepherds, the wail of the lords of the flock, because Yahweh is ruining their pasture, and their quiet meadows are laid desolate.<sup>2</sup> He has forsaken his lair like a lion, because their land has become a desert through the wasting sword.<sup>3</sup>

51. *How Jeremiah fared at the hand of priests and populace because of his temple address. The address itself is given in larger detail at Chapter 7. The clumsiness of verses 3-6, felt even in a translation, shows that the account has been added to at this point.*

xxvi. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim ben Josiah king of Judah came this message from Yahweh. Thus speaks Yahweh : Stand in the court of the temple and say to all the Judeans who enter to worship there all the words which I command you to say to them, keeping back nothing. Perhaps they may listen and repent of their bad conduct, and I may repent of the disaster which on that account I have it in mind to inflict upon them. Say to them, thus speaks Yahweh : Unless you listen to Me, to obey My law which I set before you, to listen to the words of My servants the prophets, whom I patiently sent to you, and to whom you did not listen, I will make this temple like the one at Shiloh, and will make this city an object of execration to all the nations of the world.

Now the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah saying these things in the temple. So, when he had

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> The last clause in v. 37 is an otiose repetition from v. 38.

<sup>3</sup> The last clause is a gloss to explain "the wasting sword."

finished speaking all the words which Yahweh ordered, the priests, prophets and people<sup>1</sup> seized him, crying: You must die. Why have you prophesied by Yahweh's authority that this temple shall become like the one at Shiloh and this city an uninhabited desert? And all the people thronged round Jeremiah in the temple. And the magistrates of Judah, hearing what had happened, came up from the palace to the temple and took their seats before the new gate of the temple. Then the priests and prophets said to the magistrates and to all the people: This man deserves to die, for he has prophesied against this city as you have clearly heard. But Jeremiah said to the magistrates and people: Yahweh sent me to prophesy against this temple and this city the things which you have heard. Reform then all your conduct and listen to the warning of Yahweh your God that He may repent of the disaster He has uttered against you. As for me, I am in your power, do to me what seems to you just and right. Only recognise that, if you kill me, you bring innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and its inhabitants, for Yahweh unquestionably sent me to deliver these messages in your hearing.

Then the magistrates and people said to the priests and prophets: This man does not deserve death, for what he has said to us has been by the authority of Yahweh our God. Some of the country Sheikhs too stood forward and said to the popular assembly: In the time of Hezekiah king of Judah there was a prophet Micah the Morasthite, and he said to all Judah: Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth: Zion shall become a field for ploughing and Jerusalem a heap of ruins, and the temple-hill a wooded height.<sup>2</sup> Did king Hezekiah and all Judah kill him; did they not rather fear Yahweh and implore His pity? Thereupon Yahweh repented of the calamity He had denounced against them; but we are bringing a great crime on ourselves.

There was another man prophesying by Yahweh's authority, whose name was Urijah ben Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim. He prophesied against this city and this country in the same terms

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the "people" should be omitted here. Contrast their attitude later in rescuing Jeremiah, and compare v. 11 especially.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Mic. 3: 12.

as Jeremiah. And, when king Jehoiakim<sup>1</sup> and his officers heard what he said, they planned to kill him, but when Urijah heard he fled in fear to Egypt. Then king Jehoiakim sent Elnathan ben Akbor and some others with him to Egypt. They brought Urijah out of Egypt to king Jehoiakim, who had him executed with the sword and his corpse flung into the burying ground for nameless men. However, Ahikam ben Shaphan protected Jeremiah and prevented him from being handed over to the populace for death.

52. *Chapters 27 and 28 are greatly debated by students of Jeremiah. Not only is chapter 27 much overlaid with secondary matter, but the text of the LXX differs widely from that of MT. Hence some students reject the chapter altogether. Personally, I regard such a conclusion as too sceptical. The chapters seem related as Chapters 7 and 26 are; the one giving pure oracle, the other an historical setting. As for chapter 27, probably the original consisted of verses 2-4 or 2-6 and 12b, while in the latter part the LXX offers the original text. I have ventured to bracket the sections omitted by the LXX, and suggest that the original, thus restored, deserves attention. Cf. Introduction, p. 6.*

xxvii. In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah<sup>2</sup> ben Josiah, king of Judah, the following message came from Yahweh to Jeremiah. Thus spoke Yahweh to me: Make for yourself thongs and a yoke and lay them on your neck, and send a message<sup>3</sup> to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon by the envoys who have come to Jerusalem for Zedekiah king of Judah, bidding them say thus to their masters. Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: Give this message to your masters. I made the world and man and beast upon it by My great power and outstretched arm, and I give it to him to whom it seems right. And now I have given all these countries into the power of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, My servant, even the wild beasts I have delivered over to serve him.

[And all nations shall serve him, his son and his grandson, till the period fixed for his country arrives when many nations and powerful kings enslave him in turn.] And the nation and

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit "and his mighty men."

<sup>2</sup> So, instead of "Jehoiakim," cf. v. 3.

<sup>3</sup> So with LXX; MT makes Jeremiah send a yoke to each of these kings.

kingdom [which will not serve Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon] which refuses to submit its neck to the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish with sword, famine and pestilence, oracle of Yahweh, till they are overpowered by him. As for you, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, your augurs, who are telling you that you shall not serve the king of Babylon, for they prophesy lies to you, with the result that I shall banish you from your country and scatter you till you are quite undone. But the nation which submits to the rule of the king of Babylon and serves him, I will give security in its country, oracle of Yahweh, to till the land in quietness.

I spoke to Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the same terms: Submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon, serve him and his people, and you shall live. [Why should you and your people die by sword, famine and pestilence according to the fate denounced by Yahweh against the nation which refuses to serve the king of Babylon?] Do not listen to your prophets who tell you not to serve the king of Babylon, for they are prophesying lies. I never sent them, oracle of Yahweh, and, by prophesying lies in My name, they are only bringing it about that I must scatter you, and so you and your prophets shall perish. I spoke also to the priests and all the people. Thus speaks Yahweh: Do not listen to your prophets when they tell you that the temple-vessels shall be brought back very soon from Babylon, for they are prophesying a lie. [Do not listen to them, serve the king of Babylon and you shall live. Why should this city become a desolation?] If they do prophesy and there should be a message of Yahweh with them, let them plead with Yahweh [that the rest of the vessels in the temple and palace and in Jerusalem may not be taken away to Babylon]. For thus speaks Yahweh about the [pillars and sea and pedestal and the] other vessels, [remaining in this city] which Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, did not take when he carried into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah [ben Jehoiakim, king of Judah, to Babylon along with the artisans of Judah and Jerusalem. For thus speaks Yahweh 'Tsebaoth, God of Israel, about the rest of the vessels belonging to the temple and palace] they shall be taken to Babylon [and remain there till I visit you] oracle of Yahweh [and then I will bring them up and restore them to this place].

### 53. *Jeremiah and Hananiah.*

xxviii. In the same year at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah—it was the fourth year in the fifth month—Hananiah ben Azur, the prophet who came from Gibeon, said to me in the temple in the presence of the priests and all the people, thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon and within two years I will restore to this place all the temple-vessels which Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, took away to Babylon. I will also restore to this place Jeconiah ben Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the Judean exiles to Babylon, oracle of Yahweh, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. But Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the temple: Amen, may Yahweh do this, may He confirm your prophecy by restoring hither from Babylon the temple-vessels and the exiles. Yet listen to this message which I bring to you and the whole people. The earlier prophets who preceded you and me prophesied against many countries and great kingdoms about war, disaster and pestilence; but, as for the prophet who foretells peace, when his message comes true, it will be recognised that he has really been sent by Yahweh. Then Hananiah took the yoke off Jeremiah's neck and broke it, saying before all the people: Thus speaks Yahweh: Within two years I will break in the same way the yoke of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, from the necks of all the nations. But the prophet Jeremiah left the place.

After Hananiah had broken the yoke off Jeremiah's neck, a message of Yahweh came to Jeremiah. Go and tell Hananiah: Thus speaks Yahweh: You have broken a wooden yoke, but I <sup>1</sup>will make instead of it an iron yoke. For thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: I have laid an iron yoke on the necks of all<sup>2</sup> nations, enslaving them to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, even the wild beasts I have given him. Jeremiah also said to Hananiah: Listen, Hananiah. Yahweh never sent you, and you have made this

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX; MT “you must make.”

<sup>2</sup> With LXX omit “these.”



people trust in lies. Therefore thus speaks Yahweh : I am dismissing you off the face of the land. Within a year you shall die, <sup>1</sup>because you have taught rebellion against Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> So Hananiah died in the seventh month of that year.

#### 54. *Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylonia.*

Evidently there was considerable unrest among the exiles in Babylonia. Prophets were stirring up hopes of speedy return and so bringing about difficulty between the Jews and their rulers. We may be quite sure that the Babylonian government did not take action against the prophets on the ground of their private morals, but because their teaching was politically dangerous. Jeremiah's letter was meant to damp down this fanatical outbreak by his teaching that return from exile was in no way necessary to a devout practice of the national faith. The exiles could, in his view, be good Jews in Babylonia.

The letter has been retouched by the later school of Judaism, which believed that a return to Jerusalem and the temple was necessary to the thorough revival of the national faith. It is not easy, however, to be sure as to what is original.

xxix. The following are the terms of the letter which the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the elders<sup>2</sup> of the exiled community, to the priests, prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, after the surrender of king Jeconiah and the queen-mother, the eunuchs and officers, artisans and smiths of Jerusalem, by Elasah ben Shaphan and Gemariah ben Hilkiah who were sent by Zedekiah, king of Judah, to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, at Babylon.

Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I caused to be exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon : Build and occupy houses ; plant gardens and eat their produce ; marry wives and beget children ; take wives to your sons and husbands to your daughters and let them, too, bear children ; multiply there and decrease not. Work for the good of the country<sup>3</sup> to which I have brought you as exiles ; pray to Yahweh for it, since on its well-being depends your own. For thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : Do not let yourselves be misled by the prophets and soothsayers among you, and pay no attention to their

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<sup>1</sup> Omitted by LXX, perhaps rightly.

<sup>2</sup> Probably so read with LXX instead of MT "the rest of the elders."

<sup>3</sup> So with LXX instead of MT "the city."



dreams, for they are uttering false prophecies in My name ; I never sent them, oracle of Yahweh.

Thus speaks Yahweh : 'When seventy years are fulfilled for Babylon, I will visit you and make good My promise to restore you to this place.<sup>1</sup> I keep in mind the plans I form about you, oracle of Yahweh, plans of peace and not of disaster, to give you a future for which you can hope. When you cry to Me, I will answer you<sup>2</sup> ; when you pray to Me, I will listen ; when you seek Me, you shall find Me, when you seek Me wholeheartedly. [You shall find Me, oracle of Yahweh, and I will turn your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and countries to which I have scattered you, oracle of Yahweh, and I will restore you to the place from which I exiled you.]<sup>3</sup>

Because you have said : Yahweh has raised up prophets for us in Babylon.

[Thus speaks Yahweh about the king who has succeeded David and about all the inhabitants of this city, your brethren who have not gone into exile with you.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth : I mean to send against them the sword, famine and pestilence, and to treat them like bad, uneatable figs, and to pursue them with the sword, famine and pestilence, and to make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the world, an object of execration and wonder, scoffing and reviling among all the nations to which I have scattered them, because they did not listen to My words, oracle of Yahweh, which I patiently sent them by My servants the prophets. But they did not listen, oracle of Yahweh. As for you, exiles, listen to Yahweh's message which I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.]<sup>4</sup>

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel, about Ahab ben Kolaiah and Zedekiah ben Mäaseiah, who prophesy lies

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<sup>1</sup> Several students count this a later addition, since Jeremiah's chief desire was to damp down a political agitation which was being fomented in the name of religion.

<sup>2</sup> So with 'Targum instead of "and go."

<sup>3</sup> Evidently later, since it is addressed, not to the Babylonian exiles, but to the whole exiled Judaism.

<sup>4</sup> These verses are absent from LXX, patently break the connection between v. 15 and v. 21, and, by the phrase "all the nations to which I *have* scattered them," betray internally their late origin.

to you in My name : I will deliver them into the power of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and he will execute them in your sight. And all the exiles from Judah shall use their names as a curse ; Yahweh make you like Zedekiah and Ahab whom the king of Babylon roasted to death, for they behaved infamously in Israel, debauching their neighbours' wives and issuing false prophecies in My name, but without My authority. But I did not fail to mark it, oracle of Yahweh.

<sup>1</sup>Shemaiah the Nehelamite sent a letter to Zephaniah ben Maaseiah the priest as follows : Yahweh appointed you priest in succession to Jehoiada the priest, that there might be officers in the temple to restrain and put in irons anyone who plays the part of a prophet. Why then have you not restrained Jeremiah of Anathoth from playing the prophet among you ? Here has he sent us in Babylon a letter to say " There is delay, build and occupy houses, plant gardens and eat their produce." And Zephaniah read the letter to Jeremiah. Thereupon a message of Yahweh came to Jeremiah : Send to the exiles to say, thus speaks Yahweh about Shemaiah the Nehelamite : Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you without My commission, making you trust in lies, thus speaks Yahweh : I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants ; none of his race shall continue among this people, or witness the good I mean to do to My people, oracle of Yahweh, for he has taught rebellion against Yahweh.

55. *Chapters 30-31 constitute a distinct section, which, or part of which, once formed a separate collection, before being incorporated into our book of Jeremiah. They have a common character, so that they might be termed a book of consolation for Israel. They are of very varied source and date.*

(a) xxx. 1-4. A general heading to the book of consolation.

The message from Yahweh which came to Jeremiah. Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel : Write all the messages which I have addressed to you in a book, for days are coming, oracle

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<sup>1</sup> There are three variant texts of this passage in existence ; the MT, the Syriac, the LXX. I have rendered above what seems, from the examination of the three, to come nearest to the original. One thing seems clear, viz., that we are dealing with a private letter from Shemaiah.

of Yahweh, when I will turn the fortunes of My people Israel and-Judah, speaks Yahweh, and will bring them back to the country which I gave to their fathers that they might possess it. The following are the messages which Yahweh uttered about Israel and Judah.

(b) xxx. 5-11. The heathen are to be destroyed, Israel to be punished. Evidently written when the entire nation had gone into exile.

Thus speaks Yahweh : We have heard a cry of terror, dismay and no peace is ours.<sup>1</sup> Inquire whether a man may bear a child ; why then do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in child-birth, and every face ghastly with pallor ? It is a day without its equal for greatness and a time of anguish for Jacob ; but he shall be delivered from it. It is the day, oracle of Yahweh Tsebaoth, on which I will break<sup>2</sup> the yoke from their neck and burst their bonds, nor shall foreigners enslave them any more.<sup>2</sup> Instead they shall serve Yahweh their God, and David their king whom I will set over them. Fear not, Jacob My servant, oracle of Yahweh, have no dread, O Israel, for I will save you from a distant land, and your race from the country of their exile ; and Jacob shall return and rest secure with no one to make him afraid, for I am with you, oracle of Yahweh, to save you. I will make a final end of all the nations among which I scattered you, but I will make no final end of you, though I correct you with justice and cannot count you wholly innocent.

(c) xxx. 12-17. A prophecy of a future renewal by Yahweh.

Thus speaks Yahweh : Your wound was incurable, your hurt beyond healing. There was no medicine for your sore, you possessed no healing balm at all. All your friends forgot you, they would have nothing to do with you. For I struck you down with an enemy's blow, with such correction as a stranger uses, because of the greatness of your iniquity and because your sins were abundant. Why do you cry out because of your wound ? Your disease is incurable ; I have brought these things on you because of the greatness of your iniquity and because your sins were abundant. Therefore all who devour

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<sup>1</sup> I have added "is ours."

<sup>2</sup> Following LXX in the pronouns.

you shall be devoured, and all who torment you shall go into exile in their turn, those who despoil you shall be themselves despoiled and all who rob you I will expose to be robbed. I will bring relief to your hurt and healing to your wound, because you have been called "the rejected," Zion, for whose state no man cares. Oracle of Yahweh.

(d) xxx. 18-22; xxxi. 1. Yahweh will intervene for a people which has no longer courage to approach Him.

Thus speaks Yahweh: I will restore Jacob's tents and have mercy on its homes; a town shall be rebuilt on its "tell," and a palace renewed on its old site. From them shall rise songs of praise and sounds of laughter; I will increase instead of diminishing them, will honour instead of degrading them. Their children shall be as once they were, their community stand strong before Me; and I will punish all their oppressors. Their leader shall be native-born, their chief one of their own sons; and I will bring them into close fellowship with Me, for who is there whose heart has given him courage to approach Me? Oracle of Yahweh. And they shall be My people and I will be their God.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, oracle of Yahweh, I will be the God of all the tribes of Israel and they shall be My people.

(e) xxxi. 2-6. A happy future for Northern Israel.

The nation which survived the sword has found grace in its desert-exile, Israel <sup>2</sup>went to meet its rest.<sup>2</sup> To it<sup>3</sup> Yahweh revealed Himself in a distant land, saying, I have loved you with a love of long date, and have retained toward you My loving-kindness. I will again settle Israel as a virgin who shall take her timbrel and go out in merry dance. Again you shall plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria, and the planters shall keep the vintage-feast, for a day will come when the vintagers shall cry: Up and let us away to Zion to Yahweh our God.

(f) xxxi. 7-14. An oracle of the period of Deutero-Isaiah.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Exult over Jacob, rejoice over the chief of the nations, proclaim with singing this good news:

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<sup>1</sup> Vv. 23, 24 reappear at xxiii. 19, 20. V. 22 absent from the LXX, is probably secondary.

<sup>2</sup> The text is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> With LXX instead of MT "to me."

“Yahweh has saved His people,<sup>1</sup> the remnant of Israel.” I am bringing them out of the North country, and gathering them from the ends of the earth, blind and lame, pregnant woman and woman in childbirth—none is left out; a great congregation they shall return thither. With weeping shall they come and with prayers; I will lead them by streams of water on a sure road where they do not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born son. Hear the word of Yahweh, O nations, announce it among the coastlands afar, declare how He who once scattered Israel is gathering them and will now keep them as a shepherd does his flock. For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob and will redeem them from a power which is stronger than their own. They shall come and rejoice on Zion’s height and stream out over the good land Yahweh gives them, its corn, wine and oil, its sheep and cattle; and their soul shall be like a watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more. Then shall the young girls dance with a light heart, the young men and the old shall be merry<sup>2</sup>; I will change their grief into gladness, I will comfort them and give them joy after their sorrows. I will richly satisfy the soul of the priests and My people shall be made content with the good I provide. Oracle of Yahweh.

(g) xxxi. 15-17. On the exile of Benjamin. Mother Rachel, lamenting the exile of her sons, is assured that exile is not death, but is remedial.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Hark, in Ramah is heard lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel, weeping over her children, refuses to be comforted because they are not.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Cease from weeping and dry your tears, for your weary labour shall find itself rewarded, your children shall return from the enemy’s land; there is hope in the end of your day, your children shall return to their own land. Oracle of Yahweh.

(h) xxxi. 18-20. Yahweh’s help is sure in spite of Israel’s sense of moral impotence.

I heard Ephraim making moan: “Thou didst correct me, and like an untamed colt I accepted correction; restore me

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX, instead of “save Thy people.”

<sup>2</sup> With LXX, instead of “together.”

that I may be really restored, for Thou art Yahweh, my God. Now that I grow grey,<sup>1</sup> I repent me ; now that I have learned experience, I regret my folly and am heartily ashamed, bearing the disgrace my early days have brought.” “ Ephraim is<sup>2</sup> my dear son, my charming child. Whenever I must pronounce against him, I cannot but recall how he is this. Therefore My affections are stirred in his favour and I will surely have mercy on him.” Oracle of Yahweh.

(i) xxxi. 21, 22. Oracle of return from exile ; later than Jeremiah.

Set up signals, place sign-posts [?] for yourself, turn your mind toward the way along which you have already come, and return to your towns, O Israel. How long do you mean to hesitate, O apostate daughter, since Yahweh has brought about a new thing in the land—a woman shall woo a man ?

(j) xxxi. 23-25. The future blessedness of Judah ; of uncertain date and origin.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : When I turn their fortune, men in Judah and in its towns shall yet use this expression : “ Yahweh bless thee, thou abode of righteousness, thou holy hill. <sup>3</sup>May He bless also the inhabitants of Judah’s towns and all its land, farmer and shepherd alike,<sup>3</sup> when I shall have refreshed the weary and contented the sad.”

(l) xxxi. 26. Some reader added a note of longing that such a thing might be.

Here I awoke and looked, and my sleep charmed me.

(k) xxxi. 27, 28. The new day, possibly meant originally as a general conclusion.

Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will sow man and beast broadcast in Israel and Judah ; and, as I have been watchful over them to tear up and dash down, to ruin, destroy and harm, I will be equally watchful to build up and plant. Oracle of Yahweh.

(l) xxxi. 29, 30. Against discouragement and despair.

In those days men shall cease to say, the fathers ate sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every

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<sup>1</sup> With a slight emendation.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX, which has no interrogation.

<sup>3</sup> Following LXX.

man shall die through his own sin ; if any man eats sour grapes his own teeth shall be set on edge.

(m) xxxi. 31-34. The new covenant.

Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will make with Israel and Judah a new covenant, unlike the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt. They broke that covenant of Mine, and so I rejected them,<sup>1</sup> oracle of Yahweh. But this is the covenant which I will make with Israel in the final time, oracle of Yahweh. I will set My law within them and write it on their mind and will be to them a God and they shall be a people to Me. And no man shall any more instruct friend or brother, bidding him learn to know Yahweh, for every one of them, great and small alike, shall know Me, for I will forgive their iniquity and no longer remember their sin. Oracle of Yahweh.

(n) xxxi. 35-37. Two late oracles in the style of the second Isaiah.

Thus speaks Yahweh, who appoints the sun as a light by day, the moon and stars as a light by night, who rouses the sea, making its waves roar. His name is Yahweh Tsebaoth. If this order of nature can be changed in My presence, the race of Israel may cease from remaining for ever as a nation in My presence. Oracle of Yahweh.

Thus speaks Yahweh : If the heavens above may be measured, or the foundations of the earth beneath may be laid bare, I too may reject the race of Israel because of what they have done. Oracle of Yahweh.

(o) xxxi. 38-40. An oracle as to the restoration of Jerusalem ; very late, of the type of the second Zechariah.

Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when Yahweh's city shall be rebuilt from Hananeel's tower to the corner gate, and a measuring line shall be stretched straight out to the hill Gareb and then turn to Goah ; and all the valley of corpses and altar-ashes and all the fields as far as the ravine of Kidron to the corner of the horsegate on the East shall be consecrated to Yahweh. They shall never again be wasted and ravaged.

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<sup>1</sup> Following LXX.



56. *Through the purchase of a field in Anathoth during the war with Chaldea, Jeremiah foretells the future of Judah. He has had it in charge to declare that the state is doomed and the court must go into exile. But the future of religion may be secure through the humble folk who remain in the land, buying and selling and living their ordinary lives in the fear of Yahweh. The account has been greatly overlaid with secondary matter, which can, however, be removed with tolerable ease.*

xxxii. (a) 1-5. An historical introduction.

The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah in the tenth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the guarded court of the palace, where Zedekiah, king of Judah, had caused him to be confined, on the ground that he had prophesied by the authority of Yahweh to this effect: I am about to deliver over this city into the power of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it, and Zedekiah, king of Judah, shall not escape from the power of the Chaldeans, but shall be delivered into the power of the king of Babylon, and shall meet him face to face and speak to him mouth to mouth, and shall be taken to Babylon and remain there till I visit him, oracle of Yahweh, for you are fighting a hopeless fight against the Chaldeans. So Jeremiah said.

(b) 6-16. The incident as to Hanameel.

A message from Yahweh came to me in these terms: Hanameel ben Shallum, your uncle, is coming to you to say: "Buy my field in Anathoth, for you hold the first right of purchase as next of kin." Accordingly Hanameel my cousin did come to see me<sup>1</sup> in the guarded court, and did say: "Buy my field in Anathoth, for you have the right of purchase as next of kin." Then I recognised that there was a message from Yahweh involved. So I bought the field from Hanameel my cousin, weighing out the purchase-money, seventeen shekels of silver. I also wrote out a deed, sealed it and had it witnessed, and duly weighed the money in scales. I further took the deed

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<sup>1</sup> Omit with LXX "according to the word of Yahweh."

of purchase, containing the full stipulations,<sup>1</sup> the outer copy and the inner, and I handed it over to Baruch ben Neriah ben Maaseiah in the presence of Hanameel my cousin, of the witnesses who had signed and of all the Jews who happened to be in the guarded court. In their presence I gave instruction to Baruch as follows :

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : Take this double deed, the outer and inner, and put it in an earthenware vessel so that it may last a long time. For thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : Houses, fields and vineyards shall continue to be bought in this country.

And, after I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch ben Neriah, I prayed to Yahweh.

(c) 17-23. A later expansion of the prayer.

Ah, Yahweh my Lord, Thou hast made heaven and earth by Thy great power and out-stretched arm ; nothing is too great for Thee. Thou, the great and sovereign God, whose name is Yahweh Tsebaoth, showest mercy to thousands and dost repay the sin of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them. Great in counsel, mighty in act ! Thine eyes are quick to note the ways of all mankind, to give to every man according to his conduct and the outcome of his deeds. Thou didst perform signal deeds in Egypt and dost continue them to this day in Israel and among mankind, and so Thou hast made for Thyself a fame as is seen to-day. Thou didst lead Thy people Israel out of Egypt by signal deeds, by great power and an outstretched arm, spreading terror. Thou didst give them this land, flowing with milk and honey, which Thou hadst sworn to give to their fathers ; and they, entering, took possession, but did not listen to Thy voice nor obey Thy law, nor act according to Thy orders ; and so Thou hast brought upon them all this disaster.

(d) 24-27. Jeremiah's prayer.

Ah, Yahweh, my Lord,<sup>2</sup> siege works are close to the city for its capture, and through sword, famine and pestilence the

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<sup>1</sup> The exact meaning is uncertain. Probably the words are technical phrases as to cash transactions ; and the above represents the general sense.

<sup>2</sup> Which was made the heading of the expansion at v. 17.

city is as good as given into the power of the Chaldeans who attack it. What Thou hast announced is being fulfilled, and Thou seest it clearly. Yet Thou hast said: Buy a field with money and take witnesses, when the city is as good as delivered into the power of the Chaldeans. Then a message of Yahweh came to me<sup>1</sup>: I am Yahweh, God of all living, is anything too wonderful for Me ?

(e) 28-41. A long, somewhat irrelevant expansion.

Therefore thus speaks Yahweh: I am about to deliver this city into the power of the Chaldeans and of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and he shall capture it, and the Chaldeans who are attacking this city shall enter and set it on fire, burning it and the houses, on the roofs of which sacrifices were offered to Baal and libations poured out to strange gods to My provocation. For Israel and Judah have been doing nothing but evil in My presence since their earliest years, Israel has done nothing but provoke Me by its conduct, oracle of Yahweh. Since the time when it was built this city has existed to rouse My anger and rage till I should finally blot it out of My sight because of the wickedness of Israel and Judah, who, kings, courtiers, priests, prophets, countrymen and townspeople alike have provoked Me. They turned their backs on Me, instead of their faces toward Me; though I taught them diligently, no man gave heed to learn the lesson. They set up their idols in the temple which is My peculiar property, defiling it. They built high places of Baal in the valley of Ben Hinnom, to sacrifice their children to Moloch; to commit such an abomination and make Judah guilty of such a crime was a matter which I never ordered and which never came into My mind.

Now, therefore, thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel, about this city of which you are saying that it is delivered into the power of the king of Babylon by sword, famine and pestilence. I will gather them out of all the countries to which in My hot and fierce anger I scattered them, and, bringing them back to this place, I will settle them there in security and they shall be My people and I will be their God. And I will unite them

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX instead of "to Jeremiah."

outwardly and inwardly in the fear of Me for their own profit and that of their children after them, and I will make with them an enduring covenant according to which I will never cease to do them good and I will impress the fear of Me in their minds so that they never again shall depart from Me. I will rejoice to do them good and settle them securely in this country with My entire good-will.

(f) 42-44. Yahweh's answer to Jeremiah's prayer.

Thus speaks Yahweh : As I have brought on this people all this grave disaster, so I will bring upon them all the good I am uttering in their favour. Fields shall be bought in this country about which you are saying that it is a waste without man or beast, delivered into the power of the Chaldeans. Fields shall be bought for money, deeds shall be written, sealed and witnessed in the Benjamin territory, the environs of Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, of the hill-country, of the low country and of the Negeb, for I will turn their fortune. Oracle of Yahweh.

57. *A collection of late prophecies as to restoration. They all centre round Jerusalem and three of them are specially concerned with the Davidic dynasty and the sacrificial worship. Probably the collection was formed in Jerusalem.*

(a) xxxiii. 1-9. A promise of restoration and a happy future to Jerusalem.

Again a message from Yahweh came to Jeremiah when he was still shut up in the guarded court. Thus speaks Yahweh, who made the world<sup>1</sup> and fashioned it so as to render it secure, His name is Yahweh. Call upon Me and in reply I will announce to you great and difficult matters which are unknown to you. For thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel, about the houses of this city and the palaces which are torn down . . .<sup>2</sup> to fill them with the carcasses of men whom I slew in My fierce anger, and on account of whose wickedness I hid My face from this city. I will heal its wound and cure it, and will reveal to

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is hopeless.

it treasures of peace and security ; and I will turn the fortune of Judah and Israel, and build them up as in the past. I will also make them clean from all their sin against Me, and forgive all their transgressions which they have committed against Me. Jerusalem shall become My delight and My glorious crown before all the nations of the world who learn of the blessing I bring to it, and who shall tremble with awe over the blessed security I procure to it.

(b) xxxiii. 10-13. Two promises of happiness and security ; they may spring from the community left in desolate Judah after the exile.

Thus speaks Yahweh ; In this place which you are calling a waste without man or beast, even in Judah's towns and Jerusalem's streets which are lying waste without human inhabitant and without beast, there shall yet be heard the sound of joy and gladness, the voice of bridegroom and bride, the chant of those who say : "Praise ye Yahweh Tsebaoth, for He is good, for His mercy endures for ever," and who bring a thankoffering to the temple, for I will restore the land to its old condition : Yahweh has spoken..

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth : In this place now a desert, without man or beast, and in its towns there shall yet be folds for shepherds in charge of flocks ; in the towns of the hill-country and of the low country and of the Negeb, in Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah the flocks shall be beyond counting ; Yahweh has spoken.

(c) xxxiii. 14-18. A promise of the continuance of the Davidic house and the sacrificial worship.

Days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will fulfil the gracious message which I uttered about Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause to spring from David a shoot of righteousness who shall maintain religion and right in the country. In those days Judah shall be saved and Jerusalem shall rest in security, bearing the name "Yahweh is our righteousness." For thus speaks Yahweh : David shall never be without a descendant on the throne of Israel, and the Levitical priests shall never be without someone to serve Me, continually bringing burnt-offering, burning meal-offering, and offering sacrifice.

(d) xxxiii. 19-22. Another prophecy as to the house of David and the priesthood.

' A message came from Yahweh to Jeremiah. 'Thus speaks Yahweh : If My covenant as to day and night can be annulled so that day and night no longer return in their due order, then may be annulled My covenant with David My servant so that he no longer should have a son ruling on his throne, as also My covenant with the Levitical priests who serve Me. I will increase the descendants of David My servant, and the Levites who serve Me, till they are as numberless as the starry host or the sea-sand.

(e) xxxiii. 23-26. A variant prophecy of the same type, but confined to the nation and the Davidic house.

A message came from Yahweh to Jeremiah : Have you not remarked how this people has said : "Yahweh has rejected the two families which He chose" ? So these men are rejecting My people as being in their estimation no longer a nation. Thus speaks Yahweh : If I did not appoint day and night nor set the bounds of heaven and earth, I will reject the race of Jacob and David My servant by not taking from his descendants rulers over the race of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will turn their fortune and will have mercy on them.

## 58. *Jeremiah urges surrender on Zedekiah.*

xxxiv. 1-7. The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah when Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, with his army and all the kingdoms of the world under his authority and all the nations, was attacking Jerusalem and its towns. Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel : Go and say to Zedekiah, king of Judah, thus speaks Yahweh : I will deliver this city into the power of the king of Babylon and he shall burn it. Nor shall you escape from his power, but you shall be seized and delivered over to him, and, after seeing him face to face and speaking to him mouth to mouth, you shall be brought to Babylon.

Yet listen to the message of Yahweh : O Zedekiah, king of Judah, thus speaks Yahweh about you : You need not die by the sword. You may die in peace ; and, as men burned spices in honour of your fathers, the kings who preceded you, so they may burn in honour of you, and may mourn for you,

crying, "Alas for his Majesty," for I have pronounced sentence. Oracle of Yahweh.

So Jeremiah the prophet spoke these things to Zedekiah, king of Judah in Jerusalem. Now the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem, Lachish and Azekah, for these were the only fortified towns left untaken in Judah.

59. *Cf. the Introduction page 7.*

xxxiv. 8-22. The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah, after king Zedekiah made a solemn agreement with the people of Jerusalem to proclaim a general liberation of slaves, to the effect that every one should free his male and female slaves, if these were of Hebrew birth, and thus no Jew should hold his brother Jew in slavery. The leaders and the whole people, after solemnly agreeing to free their slaves and thus put an end to slavery, gave effect to it by setting them free. But they changed their minds afterwards, and took back the men and women they had freed, forcing them to become slaves again. Thereupon a message from Yahweh came to Jeremiah: Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel: When I brought your fathers out of Egypt, that land of slavery, I made a covenant with them in these terms: at the end of seven years you must discharge any fellow Hebrew who may have sold himself to you; after his service of six years, you must discharge him. But your fathers did not listen to Me, nor pay any attention at all. You, however, have acted better and done an upright thing in My sight by proclaiming a general release and making a solemn agreement in My presence in the temple which is My peculiar property. But after that you changed your minds and dishonoured My name by re-enslaving the men and women whom you had set free and by forcing them again to become slaves.

Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh: You have not listened to Me in the general release you have proclaimed. I proclaim to you a general release to new masters,<sup>1</sup> sword, famine and pestilence, oracle of Yahweh. And I will make you an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the world. And, as for the

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<sup>1</sup> I have added "new masters" in order to bring out the sense.



men who break My covenant by not maintaining the terms of the solemn agreement which they made in My presence, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests and all the people of the land, who passed between the pieces of the calf<sup>1</sup>, I will deliver them into the power of their enemies who seek their life, and their carcasses shall be food for the birds and beasts of prey. Zedekiah, too, the king of Judah, and his courtiers, I will deliver into the power of their enemies who seek their life, even the army of the king of Babylon, which has retired from the attack. I am giving order, oracle of Yahweh, and I will bring these back against this city, and they shall attack and capture and burn it down, and I will make the towns of Judah an uninhabited waste.

60. *The Rechabites were a Jewish sect which rejected all the settled agricultural and village life of Palestine in favour of the nomadic existence. From their faithfulness to their narrower ideal Jeremiah points the moral to the faithlessness of Israel.*

xxxv. The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah during the reign of Jehoiakim ben Josiah.

Go to the Rechabites and bid them come to the temple into one of the side-rooms and offer them wine. So I took Jaazaniah ben Jeremiah ben Habazinia, his brothers and sons, and all the Rechabites, and brought them into the temple into a side-room belonging to the sons<sup>2</sup> of Hanan ben Igdaiah, a man of God, which is close to the side-room of the chiefs and above the side-room of Maaseiah ben Shallum, threshold-keeper. I also set before the Rechabites a jar of wine with cups and bade them drink. But they answered: We never drink wine, for Jonadab ben Rechab, our founder, forbade us and our children ever to drink wine or build houses or plant crops or own vineyards, ordering us to live in tents all our lives

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<sup>1</sup> "The calf which they cut in pieces and then passed between the pieces." Evidently a marginal note, giving the ritual which was followed in such agreements. It came into the wrong place in the Hebrew text.

<sup>2</sup> Something is wrong here. We ought to have instead of "sons of Hanan," a single proper name, since the person referred to is called a "Man of God."

in order to live long on the earth in which we are mere passing guests. So we have obeyed the command of Jonadab ben Rechab, our founder, in all his orders. As a result, we, our wives and our children never drink wine; nor do we build houses to live in, nor own vineyards, arable land or crop. We have always lived in tents, carrying out the orders of Jonadab our founder. But, when Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, invaded the country, we decided that we must go to Jerusalem in order to avoid the army of the Chaldeans and that of Aram ; hence we came to live in Jerusalem.

Then a message from Yahweh came to Jeremiah : Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel ; Go and say to the men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem, will you not take a reproof as to how you should listen to My words ? Oracle of Yahweh. The commands of Jonadab ben Rechab, forbidding his followers to drink wine, have been observed, and in deference to the orders of their founder the men have continually refused to drink wine. But I gave you patient instruction, and you did not listen. I was diligent in sending you My servants the prophets, with the command that every man should repent of his evil conduct and reform and refrain from following other gods to serve them, and so should they live in the land which I gave to them and their fathers. But you paid no attention and refused to listen to Me. Now, since the followers of Jonadab ben Rechab have maintained the rule of their founder, while this people has refused to listen to Me, thus speaks Yahweh, God of Tsebaoth, God of Israel : I will bring on Judah and on all the citizens of Jerusalem all the disaster of which I warned them, for I warned them, but they did not listen ; I summoned them, but they did not respond. Also Jeremiah said to the Rechabites : Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : Because you have listened to the command of Jonadab your founder and have carefully carried out all his instructions, while the world lasts, Jonadab ben Rechab shall not be without a man to serve Me.

## 61. *Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's roll.*

xxxvi. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim ben Josiah, king of Judah, the following message from Yahweh came to Jeremiah :

Take a scroll and write on it all the messages which I have uttered to you about Israel, Judah and all the nations from the time when I began to speak to you in the life-time of Josiah down to the present day. Perhaps Judah may listen to the utter disaster which I have it in mind to bring upon them, and may repent of their evil conduct, so that I may forgive their sin and transgression. So Jeremiah summoned Baruch ben Neriah, and Baruch wrote in a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation all Yahweh's messages to him. Then Jeremiah gave Baruch directions : I am prevented from going into the temple ; but you shall go and, out of the scroll which you have written at my dictation, you shall read Yahweh's messages on a fast-day in the temple in the presence of the people as well as of all Judah who come up from their towns. Perhaps their prayer may thus become acceptable to Yahweh, and they may repent of their evil conduct, for the indignant anger of Yahweh, with which He threatens this people, has become fierce. So Baruch obeyed the orders of Jeremiah the prophet by reading Yahweh's messages out of the book in the temple.

In the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim ben Josiah, king of Judah, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the Judean towns proclaimed a fast before Yahweh. And Baruch, in the hearing of all the people, read out of the book Jeremiah's messages in the side-room of Gemariah ben Shaphan, the Secretary, in the upper court at the new temple gate. When Micaiah ben Gemariah ben Shaphan heard the messages of Yahweh out of the book, he went down to the palace into the Secretary's room, where a meeting was being held of the officials, Elishama the Secretary, Delaiah ben Shemaiah, Elnathan ben Akbor, Gemariah ben Shaphan and Zedekiah ben Hananiah, in fact, all the officials. To them Micaiah reported what he had heard, when Baruch read from the book in the hearing of the people. Thereupon the officials sent to Baruch Jehudi ben Nethaniah ben Shelemiah ben Cushi to say : " Bring here the scroll which you have been reading aloud in public " ; and Baruch brought it to them. And they said : " Read it aloud again<sup>1</sup> to us." So Baruch read it aloud to them. When they heard the messages, they turned in

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX instead of " sit down."

surprise to each other, and said<sup>1</sup>: "We must report all this to the king." Then they questioned Baruch: "Tell us how you came to write these things. Was it at his dictation?" And Baruch answered: "It was. He went on dictating these matters and I faithfully<sup>2</sup> wrote in the scroll." The officials said to Baruch: "Go and hide like Jeremiah, and let no one know where you both are." Then they went to the king in his own apartment, leaving the scroll behind in the room of Elishama the Secretary, and reported the whole circumstances to the king.

The king sent Jehudi the Secretary to bring the scroll, and he, bringing it out of the room of Elishama the Secretary, read it aloud to the king and to the officials who were standing beside him. Now the king was sitting in his winter-room—it happened to be the ninth month—with a brazier burning in front of him. When Jehudi had read three or four pages, the king slashed them with a penknife and tossed them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was finished. The king and his servants, on hearing the messages, had no fear and did not tear their garments. Indeed, though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he did not listen to them, but gave order that Jerahmeel of the blood royal, Seraiah ben Azriel and Shelemiah ben Abdeel should arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. However, Yahweh hid them.

After the king had burned the scroll containing the messages written by Baruch at Jeremiah's dictation, a message from Yahweh came to Jeremiah. Take another scroll, and write on it everything contained in the first scroll which Jehoiakim, king of Judah burned. Then say to king Jehoiakim, thus speaks Yahweh: You have burned this scroll, saying: Why did you write in it that the king of Babylon should come and ruin this country, destroying out of it man and beast? Therefore thus speaks Yahweh against Jehoiakim, king of Judah: He shall not have a descendant occupying the throne of David, and his carcase shall be exposed to the heat by day and the frost

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit "to Baruch." The officials were talking the matter over among themselves.

<sup>2</sup> With a slight emendation of the MT.

by night. I will punish him and his race and his servants for their iniquity, bringing on them and on the citizens of Jerusalem and the men of Judah the entire disaster which I denounced against them without rousing their attention. So Baruch<sup>1</sup> took another scroll and wrote on it to Jeremiah's dictation all the contents of the book which Jehoiakim, king of Judah, had burned; there were also added many passages of a similar character.

62. *Jeremiah declares that the retreat of the Chaldean besiegers at the approach of an Egyptian army will afford a mere temporary relief; cf. chapter xxxiv.*

xxxvii. 1-10. Zedekiah ben Josiah came to the throne instead of Coniah ben Jehoiakim; Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, appointed him king over the country of Judah. He and his courtiers and the people of the country paid no attention to Yahweh's messages delivered through Jeremiah the prophet.

King Zedekiah, however, sent Jehukal ben Shelemiah and Zephaniah ben Maaseiah the priest to Jeremiah the prophet, with the request, Pray for us to Yahweh our God. Now Jeremiah was going and coming freely among the people; he was not yet put in prison. Pharaoh's army had advanced from Egypt, and, when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard about this, they raised the siege of Jerusalem.

A message of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet: Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel: Take this message to the king of Judah, who sent you to consult Me. Pharaoh's army which advanced to help you has retreated to Egypt, and the Chaldeans shall resume their attack on this city, and, after capturing it, shall burn it. Thus speaks Yahweh: Do not cheat yourselves by the persuasion that the Chaldeans will leave you entirely, for they shall not. Even if you had defeated the entire Chaldean army which is in the field against you, and there were left merely wounded men, scattered in their tents, they should rise and burn down this city.

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX instead of "Jeremiah," etc.

63. *The prophet is arrested and thrown into prison on a charge of desertion to the enemy.*

xxxvii. 11-21. When the Chaldean army raised the siege of Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah left the city to go into Benjamin in order to . . .<sup>1</sup> thence among his kindred. When he reached the Benjamin gate, a guard posted there, whose name was Irijah ben Shelemiah ben Hananiah, arrested Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "You are deserting to the Chaldeans." Jeremiah replied: "It is false, I am not deserting to the Chaldeans"; but Irijah refused to listen, and, having arrested him, brought him to the officials. The officials in high indignation had Jeremiah beaten, and put him into the house of Jonathan the Secretary, which had been made into a prison. So Jeremiah was confined in an underground cell, where he remained for a considerable time.

King Zedekiah sent and had him brought secretly into the palace, where he questioned him as to whether he had any message from Yahweh. Jeremiah replied; "I have; you shall be delivered into the power of the king of Babylon." He also said to the king: "What wrong have I done to you or your courtiers or this people that you have put me in prison? And where have you put your prophets who prophesied that the king of Babylon should never attack you and this country? Now, your majesty, listen and consider my petition favourably. Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the Secretary, or I shall die there." So king Zedekiah gave orders that Jeremiah should be confined in the guarded court and be supplied with a daily loaf from the bakers' bazaar till the bread supply of the city was exhausted. Accordingly Jeremiah remained in the guarded court.

64. *Jeremiah, at the instigation of some of the courtiers, is flung into a cistern, but is rescued by Ebed-melech.*

xxxviii. 1-28a. Shephatiah ben Mattan, Gedaliah ben Pashhur, Jukal ben Shelemiah and Pashhur ben Malchiah heard the terms in which Jeremiah was in the habit of addressing the people; such as, Thus speaks Yahweh: The man who remains

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<sup>1</sup> The word is a conundrum.



in this city shall die by sword, famine or pestilence, but he who surrenders to the Chaldeans shall at least survive and have his life as his share of booty ; or again : Thus speaks Yahweh : This city shall be delivered into the power of the army of the king of Babylon and captured. So they said to the king : This person should be killed, for he is damping down the courage of the garrison left in the city,—indeed of the whole population, by talking to them in this way. This fellow is not seeking the good of this people, but its ruin. King Zedekiah replied : “ He is in your power,” for the king was wholly unable to resist them.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly they took Jeremiah and flung him into a cistern [belonging to Malchiah of the blood royal<sup>2</sup>] in the guarded court, letting him down by ropes ; the cistern was dry except for mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

Now Ebed-melech the Cushite,<sup>2</sup> a eunuch, heard that Jeremiah was put into the cistern—he was on duty at the palace. Since the king was acting as judge at the Benjamin gate, Ebed-melech went out of the palace and said to the king : Your majesty, these men have acted abominably toward the prophet Jeremiah by throwing him into a cistern, and he will die on the spot from famine, for there is no bread left in the city. Then the king gave orders to Ebed-melech : Take with you from here three<sup>3</sup> men and draw him up out of the cistern before he dies. So Ebed-melech took the men and went into the palace to a wardrobe,<sup>4</sup> and, taking out of it worn and old clothes, he lowered them by ropes into the cistern where Jeremiah was. Ebed-melech bade Jeremiah put the old and worn clothes between his armpits and the ropes, which Jeremiah did. Whereupon they drew him up by the ropes clear of the cistern, and Jeremiah remained in the guarded court.

King Zedekiah sent and summoned the prophet Jeremiah to his presence at the entry of the bodyguard<sup>5</sup> in the temple,

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX ; MT reading “ you ” makes the sentence part of Zedekiah's reply.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the phrase bracketed at v. 6 should be transferred to v. 7, and it was Ebed-melech, not the cistern, who belonged to Malchiah.

<sup>3</sup> So with LXX instead of the unnecessarily large number of thirty in MT.

<sup>4</sup> Emended text.

<sup>5</sup> The most likely interpretation of an uncertain phrase *cf.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 8.



and the king said : I have a question to put to you ; conceal nothing from me. Jeremiah replied : When I answer, will you not kill me ? Whenever I give you advice, you never listen to me. So king Zedekiah swore an oath secretly to Jeremiah : By the life of Yahweh who made us living men, I will not have you killed, nor hand you over into the power of these men.<sup>1</sup> Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah : Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Tsebaoth, God of Israel : If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life shall be safe, this city shall not be burned, and not you alone, but your household shall save your lives. But if you do not surrender, this city will be delivered into the power of the Chaldeans and burned, and you yourself shall not escape them. King Zedekiah replied : I am afraid of the Jews who have deserted to the Chaldeans, lest they<sup>2</sup> deliver me into their<sup>2</sup> power and they insult me. But Jeremiah said : They shall not deliver you. Listen to Yahweh's voice in the matter about which I am speaking, so shall you be safe and save your life. If, however, you refuse to surrender, this is what Yahweh has revealed to me. I saw in a vision all the women left in the royal harem being led before the officers of the king of Babylon, and they were repeating : "Thy intimate friends have deceived and overcome thee, have plunged thy feet in the mire and forsaken thee." All your wives and sons shall be surrendered to the Chaldeans and you yourself shall not escape their power ; you shall be seized by the power of the king of Babylon and this city shall be burned.<sup>3</sup>

Then said Zedekiah to Jeremiah : Let no one know anything about this matter, if you wish to escape death. Should the officials learn that I have talked to you, and should they come and bid you tell them without concealment both what you said to me and what I said to you, with a promise that thus you shall escape death, you must answer them : I was presenting a petition to the king not to put me back into Jonathan's house

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<sup>1</sup> Omit with LXX the following phrase.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps "they" means the Chaldeans and "their" the Jews. As, however, I cannot feel sure, I have preferred clumsy English to dogmatic translation.

<sup>3</sup> The probable sense of this obscure passage is that v. 22 is a dirge over the Kingdom, which is addressed as "thou." Then v. 23 is a prose attempt, and not a very happy one, to explain the poem.

to die there. The officials did come and question Jeremiah, and he told them what the king had bid him say ; so they let him alone, for the interview had not been overheard. And Jeremiah lived in the guarded court until Jerusalem was captured.

65. *An account of what befell Jeremiah immediately after the capture of Jerusalem. It is prefaced in the MT, but not in LXX, by a statement abridged from chapter lii. 4-10.*

xxxviii. 28b-xxxix. 14. When Jerusalem was captured [in the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign over Judah, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, advanced with all his army against Jerusalem and besieged it ; on the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of his reign a breach was made in the walls] the officers of the king of Babylon entered and took up their post at the middle gate, viz., Nebo Shazban the Rabsaris, Nergal Sarezer the Rabmag,<sup>1</sup> and the other officers of the king of Babylon.

Now, when Zedekiah, king of Judah, and the garrison saw them, they escaped and left the city during the night by the royal garden through the gate between the two walls, making in the direction of the Arabah. But the Chaldean army pursued and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and having seized him, they brought him to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, at Riblah in the land of Hamath, who pronounced sentence on him. The king of Babylon had Zedekiah's sons executed at Riblah in their father's presence ; he also executed the nobles of Judah. He further blinded Zedekiah, and caused him to be put in brazen chains in order to be brought to Babylon. The Chaldeans also burned the palace and the houses<sup>2</sup> of the people, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard, led away into exile in Babylon the common people left in the city, those who had

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<sup>1</sup> There has been some confusion in the Hebrew text in connection with these foreign names. Probably we have to do with only two high officials named again in v. 13. Their titles "rabsaris" and "rabmag" I have thought it wiser to leave untranslated.

<sup>2</sup> MT reads "the house." Perhaps the original was "the house of Yahweh," i.e., the temple. Certainly "the houses of the people" is a curious expression.

deserted to him and the rest of the people who were left.<sup>1</sup> He left behind, however, in Judah some of the humble people who had no property, and at that time allotted to them vineyards and fields.

Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, issued the following orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard : Pay particular attention to him that he come to no harm ; treat him as he himself shall desire. So Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard, Nebo Shazban Rabsaris, Nergal Sarezer Rabmag and all the leading officers of the king of Babylon sent and took Jeremiah out of the guarded court and handed him over to Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan to be removed to his house ; and he lived among the people.

66. *Jeremiah's prophecy about Ebed-melech. As it was uttered before the capture of the city, it is patently out of place here and is really a supplement to chapter xxxviii. above.*

xxxix. 15-18. When Jeremiah was confined in the guarded court, a message of Yahweh came to him : Go and say to Ebed-melech the Cushite : thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : I am about to fulfil My sentence against this city, not for good, but for evil, and it will be fulfilled at this time in your sight. But I will deliver you in that day, oracle of Yahweh, and you shall not be delivered into the power of the men of whom you are afraid, for I will cause you to escape and you shall not fall by the sword, but shall have your life as your share in the booty, because you have put your trust in Me. Oracle of Yahweh.

67. *Chapters xl.-xliv. seem to form a little collection which relate the fortunes of the community in Judah after the departure of the exiles to Babylon. The collector was interested in the fate of Jeremiah ; but the person of the prophet falls rather into the background compared with the fate of the community. When the section was added to our book it was fitted with a heading which is not very appropriate to the contents.*

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<sup>1</sup> I have translated literally, but it is evident that there is something wrong. Either the last clause is a mere mistaken repetition, or the second " people who are left " refers to the country people as contrasted with the city population, or there is a deeper confusion in the text.

(a) xl. 1. The title.

The message which came from Yahweh to Jeremiah after Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard, dismissed him from Ramah, when he was found in chains among the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah who were on their way to Babylon.

(b) xl. 2-6. Another account of Jeremiah being committed to the care of Gedaliah. It is parallel to xxxix. 11-14, from which it is separated by the intruded oracle about Ebed-melech. It has also, in certain respects, a more authentic note than the parallel.

The captain of the bodyguard laid hold of Jeremiah and said: Yahweh your God pronounced the doom we have witnessed on this place, and Yahweh has brought about the thing He uttered because you sinned against Him and did not listen to His voice.<sup>1</sup> So now I set you free from your chains. If you wish to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will take special care of you; if, however, you prefer not to come with me, refrain. See, the whole country is open to you, go wherever you wish to go. . . .<sup>2</sup> Go back to Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the towns of Judah, and live with him among the people, or go wherever you may prefer. And the captain of the bodyguard supplied him with rations and dismissed him. So Jeremiah came to Gedaliah at Mizpah and lived with him among the people who were left in the country.

(c) xl. 7-12. Gedaliah attempts to restore order as representative of Babylon.

Now, when the captains of the bands roving in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah ben Ahikam governor of the country, committing to his charge men, women and children belonging to the poorer people who had not been taken away as exiles to Babylon, Ishmael ben Nethaniah, Johanan<sup>3</sup> ben Kareah, Seraiah ben Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite and Jezaniah son of the Maachathite, with their men came to

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit the last clause.

<sup>2</sup> The first clause of v. 5 is hopelessly corrupt. Possibly the original contained a refusal to allow Jeremiah to settle in Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> With LXX omit "and Jonathan."

Gedaliah at Mizpah. And Gedaliah, pledging himself by an oath, said to them and their men : Have no fear of the Chaldean officials,<sup>1</sup> settle in the country and be loyal to the king of Babylon, and everything will go well. As for me, I am settled in Mizpah, responsible to the Chaldeans who may come to us, but, as for you, gather in your harvest of wine, fruit and oil, store it, and live in the towns you may choose to occupy. Thereupon the Jews also who were in Moab and among the Ammonites, in Edom and in all the surrounding countries, when they learned that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed as governor over them Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan, returned also from all the places to which they had been scattered and came to Gedaliah at Mizpah and gathered a good harvest of wine and fruit.

(d) xl. 13-xli. 18. Ishmael assassinates Gedaliah.

Johanan ben Kareah and all the captains of the field-bands came to Gedaliah at Mizpah and said to him : Are you not aware that Baalis, king of Ammon, has sent Ishmael ben Nethaniah to murder you ? But Gedaliah did not believe them. Johanan ben Kareah also spoke privately to Gedaliah at Mizpah, saying : Let me go and murder Ishmael without letting it be known. Why should he murder you ? That would result in Judah, which has come together round you, being scattered, and in the ruin of the remnant of Judah. But Gedaliah said to Johanan : You must not do this. What you say about Ishmael is untrue.

In the seventh month Ishmael ben Nethaniah ben Elishama of the blood-royal,<sup>2</sup> accompanied by ten men, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and they shared a common meal. But Ishmael with his ten companions rose and murdered Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor over the country as well as all the Jews who were with him at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who happened to be there. Ishmael murdered all the fighting men. Next day, while the murder of Gedaliah was still unknown, there arrived eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, with their beards shaved, their clothes rent and cuttings in

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> With LXX omit "and the royal officers."

their flesh, carrying offering and incense for the temple. And Ishmael went out to meet them,<sup>1</sup> weeping as he went,<sup>1</sup> and, when he met them, he said : Come to Gedaliah. But, when they were well within the town, Ishmael butchered them and flung them into a cistern.<sup>2</sup> However, ten men who happened to be with the rest said to Ishmael : Do not kill us, for we have in the fields hidden stores of wheat and barley, oil and honey. So he held his hand and did not kill them with their friends. The cistern into which Ishmael flung the carcasses of the men he murdered was a large one<sup>3</sup> which king Asa made on account of Baasha, king of Israel ; Ishmael filled it with the dead. And Ishmael carried off as prisoners all the survivors in Mizpah, and the royal princesses, whom<sup>4</sup> Nebuzaradan, captain of the body-guard, had committed to the care of Gedaliah, and rising early, Ishmael started to cross to the Ammonites.

Now when Johanan ben Kareah, and the captains of bands heard of all the crime committed by Ishmael, they led out their men to fight against him and overtook him at the great pool at Gibeon. And the people with Ishmael were greatly relieved when they saw Johanan and the captains of bands with him ; so the people whom Ishmael had taken prisoners from Mizpah went over to Johanan. But Ishmael escaped with eight men from Johanan, and made his way to the Ammonites, while Johanan and the captains of bands gathered the survivors, rescued from Ishmael after his murder of Gedaliah, men<sup>5</sup> women and children and eunuchs whom he brought back from Gibeon. And they went and halted at Geruth Chimham, near Bethlehem, intending to proceed to Egypt, through fear of the Chaldeans, for they were terrified because Ishmael had murdered Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor of the country.

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<sup>1</sup> The sentence may also mean, especially with LXX reading, "as he came weeping along the way."

<sup>2</sup> With the LXX omit the last clause.

<sup>3</sup> So with LXX instead of "by the hand of Gedaliah."

<sup>4</sup> With LXX omit a clause which merely repeats the preceding.

<sup>5</sup> Omit "fighting men," a mistaken gloss. Ishmael killed the fighting men. The whole sentence is clumsily overlaid.



(c) xlii. The people in their dismay and confusion consult Jeremiah.

The captains of bands, Johanan ben Kareah and <sup>1</sup>Azariah ben Maaseiah,<sup>1</sup> and all the people, great and small alike, approached Jeremiah the prophet and said: Receive this our petition favourably—pray to Yahweh your God on behalf of these survivors, for we are left few instead of many as you can see; and let Yahweh your God show us the way we should go and the thing we should do. And Jeremiah the prophet answered: Very good, I will pray to Yahweh your God as you ask, and whatever answer Yahweh gives I will let you know without concealing anything. They on their side said to Jeremiah: May Yahweh bear true and unerring witness against us, if we do not act precisely in agreement with the decision Yahweh your God sends. Whether it be good or bad, we will obey the direction of Yahweh our God to whom we are sending you in order that we may prosper through our obedience.

After ten days a message of Yahweh came to Jeremiah. So he summoned Johanan ben Kareah and the captains of bands with him and the entire people great and small, and said to them: Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your request: If you remain in this country, I will build you up instead of ruining you, will plant you instead of tearing you up, for I have repented of the harm I have done to you. Dismiss all your fear of the king of Babylon, and have no fear at all, oracle of Yahweh, for I am with you to save and deliver you out of his power. I will show kindness to you by making him compassionate enough to allow you to settle<sup>2</sup> in the country. If, however, you resolve not to remain in this country, and so fail to listen to Yahweh your God, saying instead: “No, we will go to Egypt where we shall see no more war, nor hear a trumpet-blast, nor suffer for want of food, and we will settle there,” then listen to Yahweh’s message, you survivors of Judah. Thus speaks Yahweh Tsèbaoth God of Israel: If you make up your minds to go to Egypt and actually go to live there, the sword of which you are afraid shall overtake you in Egypt, and the famine which you dread shall pursue you into Egypt, and you shall die there. All the men who make up their minds

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>2</sup> So with Syriac, instead of “restore.”



to go and live in Egypt shall die by sword, famine and pestilence ; not one of them shall survive or escape the disaster which I will bring upon them. For thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : As My hot anger was poured out on the citizens of Jerusalem, so shall it be poured out on you when you go to Egypt, and you shall become an object of execration and reproach, a desolation and a scandal, and you shall never again see this place. <sup>1</sup>This is Yahweh's message<sup>1</sup> to you, you survivors of Judah : Do not go to Egypt ; recognise that I have solemnly warned you. But you have wronged your own souls in sending the message<sup>2</sup> : Pray for us to Yahweh our God, and precisely what Yahweh our God orders you must announce, and we will do it. I have given you to-day the message, and you have not listened to Yahweh your God, nor to His message by me. Now you must know that you shall die by sword, famine and pestilence in the place where you prefer to go and live.

(f) xliii. 1-7. The people elect to go to Egypt.

When Jeremiah had finished his report to the people of all the preceding message which Yahweh their God had sent him to deliver to them, Azariah ben Maaseiah,<sup>3</sup> Johanan ben Kareah and all the headstrong party who opposed Jeremiah, said : You are lying ; Yahweh our God never sent you to forbid us to go and live in Egypt ; but Baruch ben Neriah is misleading you about us in order to hand us over into the power of the Chaldeans, who may kill us or take us captive to Babylon. So Johanan ben Kareah and the captains of bands and the entire people did not listen to Yahweh's order to remain in Judah. Instead Johanan and the captains collected the survivors of Judah who had returned to live in Judah from the nations to which they had been scattered, men, women and children, the princesses and all whom Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard, had settled with Gedaliah and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch ben Neriah ; and they went into Egypt, for they did not listen to Yahweh ; and they reached Tahpanhes (Daphne).

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<sup>1</sup> So with Targum.

<sup>2</sup> So probably with LXX instead of "sending me to Yahweh to say." But there is some confusion in this passage.

<sup>3</sup> So with LXX.

(g) xliii. 8-13. Jeremiah predicts the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar.

A message of Yahweh came to Jeremiah in Daphne as follows: Take great stones and hide them . . . in the oblong area,<sup>1</sup> in front of Pharaoh's palace at Daphne in the presence of the Jews; and say to them: Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: I am sending for My servant, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and he<sup>2</sup> will erect his throne over these stones which you<sup>2</sup> have hidden, and will spread his pavilion over them. He will come and conquer Egypt; what is doomed to death, death shall take; what is doomed to captivity shall go into captivity; what is doomed to the sword, the sword shall have. He<sup>2</sup> shall set the Egyptian temples on fire, burning and robbing; he shall deal with Egypt as a shepherd deals with his coat, picking the lice out of it; and he shall depart in peace.

He shall break in pieces the obelisks in the Egyptian Beth Shemesh and burn down the Egyptian temples.<sup>3</sup>

(b) xliv. Jeremiah warns the Egyptian Jews against practising a mixed religion, which combined the worship of Yahweh with the worship of a queen of heaven. He says that such a cult means departure from Yahweh and that the only result must be that Jewry in Egypt will melt away into heathenism. The oracle has been overlaid with secondary material. The editor seems to have understood Jeremiah to mean that, if the Jews in Egypt practised such a debased cult, Yahweh would punish them by blotting out the colony through some great calamity.

The message which came to Jeremiah for all the Jews living in Egypt, living, that is, in Migdol and in Daphne and in Noph [Memphis] and in the Pathròs country:

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: You have seen for yourselves all the disaster which I have brought on Jerusalem and the towns of Judah—how they lie to-day an uninhabited waste because of the wickedness men committed in provoking Me by going and sacrificing to strange gods which were unknown to them and their fathers.<sup>4</sup> I sent to them patiently My servants

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<sup>1</sup> MT offers two words, one of which is unknown, while the other, translated above, is very uncertain in sense.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX instead of "I will erect," "I have hidden" and "I shall set."

<sup>3</sup> Verse 13 is an addition. Note how it comes limping after Nebuchadrezzar's victorious departure.

<sup>4</sup> So with LXX; MT has "your fathers."

the prophets, bidding them refrain from this abominable conduct which I hate; but they neither listened nor paid attention so as to repent of their wrong-doing and cease to sacrifice to strange gods. So My hot anger was poured out and raged among the towns of Judah and streets of Jerusalem, making them waste and desolate as they are to-day.

Now, thus speaks Yahweh, God of Tsebaoth, God of Israel: Why are you bringing great mischief on yourselves, so that man and woman, child and suckling, should be cut off from Jewry, and no survivor be left to you, by provoking Me through your conduct in sacrificing to strange gods in Egypt where you have come to live, with the result that you will destroy yourselves and become an object of execration and contempt, among all the nations of the world? Have you forgotten the wicked deeds which your fathers, the kings of Judah and your leaders performed in Judah and the streets of Jerusalem?<sup>1</sup> They were never contrite, nor had they any fear; they did not obey My law and statutes which I set before their fathers.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: I have resolved on your ruin to destroy all Jewry. I will lay hold on the survivors of Judah who decided to come and live in Egypt, and they shall come to an end in Egypt; they shall fall by sword and famine, shall come to an end both small and great, shall die by sword and famine and shall become an object of cursing and horror, execration and contempt. I will punish those who live in Egypt, as I punished Jerusalem, by sword, famine and pestilence. Among those left of Judah who have come to live in Egypt there shall not be a single survivor or refugee who shall escape to return to the country of Judah to which they may desire to return and live there; none shall return except casual refugees.

Then all the men who knew that their wives were sacrificing to strange gods, and all the women who were standing by, answered Jeremiah with a loud outcry<sup>3</sup>: No one here is listening

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<sup>1</sup> MT has a very confused text. I have followed LXX and Syr. in the above translation.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX; MT has "before you and your fathers."

<sup>3</sup> So probably instead of "a great congregation." With Driver omit the last clause of the verse.

to the message which you have delivered to us in the name of Yahweh, but we mean to carry out the definite decision we have made to sacrifice and offer libations to the queen of heaven, as we and our fathers, our kings and our chiefs did in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. Then we had enough to eat and things went well with us, and we never saw calamity ; but, since the time we gave up sacrificing and pouring libations to the queen of heaven, we have been in want of everything and have been wasted by sword and famine. <sup>1</sup>The women further added<sup>1</sup> : When we sacrificed and poured libations to the queen of heaven, did we make the cakes stamped with her image or pour the libations without the authority of our husbands ?

Thereupon Jeremiah addressed all the people, men and women, even the whole people who had given him this answer. Did Yahweh not remember nor pay close attention to the sacrifices which you and your fathers, your kings and chiefs and the people of the land offered in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, till He could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations you were committing ? And so your country was made a desolate waste and an object of execration without inhabitant as it is to-day. Because you offered sacrifice and sinned against Yahweh, not listening to His voice, nor obeying His law, His statutes and His testimonies, this present disaster has befallen you.

Jeremiah said to the whole people and to the women : Listen to the message of Yahweh, all you Jews in Egypt. Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : You women<sup>2</sup> are declaring by your words and making it sure by your deeds that you will fulfil the vows you have made to sacrifice and pour libations to the queen of heaven ; you shall certainly make good your words and fulfil your vows. Listen, therefore, to the message of Yahweh, all you Jews who live in Egypt. I have sworn by My great name, speaks Yahweh, My name shall no more be uttered by any Jew in the entire land of Egypt—to say, “ By the life of Yahweh.” I am intent upon them for hurt and not for blessing, and the Jews in Egypt shall be consumed to the last

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<sup>1</sup> Supplied from LXX Luc.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX instead of “ you and your wives.”

man by sword and famine. The small company of those who escape the sword shall return from Egypt to the land of Judah, and all the Jewish refugees who came to Egypt to live there shall recognise whose word stands sure, Mine or theirs. And this is the sign to you, oracle of Yahweh, that I am punishing you here in order that you may learn how sure are My messages for your hurt. Thus speaks Yahweh : I will deliver Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, into the power of his enemies who seek his life, as I delivered Zedekiah, king of Judah, into the power of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.

### 68. *Jeremiah's oracle to Baruch.*

xliv. The message delivered by Jeremiah the prophet to Baruch ben Neriah, when he wrote these messages in a book at Jeremiah's dictation in the fourth year of Jehoiakim ben Josiah, king of Judah.

Thus speaks Yahweh, God of Israel, to you Baruch : You have said : Alas for me, since Yahweh has added trouble to my first sorrow, I am weary of my lament, and I have found no rest. Behold,<sup>1</sup> it is I who built up, who also ruin ; what I planted I also tear up.<sup>2</sup> You are seeking great things for yourself, seek them not. Behold, I am about to bring disaster on all mankind, oracle of Yahweh, and wherever you go, I will give you your life as your only share in the spoil.

69. *Chapters xlvi.-li. constitute a separate collection of oracles, which deal with the fate or the temper of the nations, which influenced the fate or the temper of Judah at this period. LXX places the collection in the middle of chapter xxv. It is difficult to determine the exact date to which these utterances are to be referred. Some students deny the book en bloc to Jeremiah.*

*The whole collection was provided with a heading.*

xlvi. i. The message of Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet about the nations.

Thereafter the oracles were arranged under the separate peoples which were dealt with.

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<sup>1</sup> Probably omit the heading of the verse, " thus shall you say, thus speaks Yahweh." Baruch is being directly addressed.

<sup>2</sup> The last clause is untranslatable as it stands, and is absent from the LXX. If it were legitimate to add a word, it might be rendered " as for you, all the world is before you."

xlvi. 2. On Egypt.

(a) xlv. 2-6. The oracle about Egypt was then given an interesting and historically valuable heading. This oracle may naturally represent the tremendous impression produced on Jeremiah by the battle at Carchemish, where the two great powers after the collapse of Assyria met to decide the empire of the world.

About the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, on the Euphrates at Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim ben Josiah, king of Judah.

Make ready shield and buckler, march out to battle. Harness the horses, mount you cavalry men. Helmet on heads, take your posts. Polish the spearheads, put on the breast-plates. Why<sup>1</sup> are these terrified, turned in retreat? Their heroes are beaten down, they flee without rallying. Terror is on every side, oracle of Yahweh. The swiftest may not flee, nor the bravest escape; northward by Euphrates' banks they stumble and fall.

(b) xlv. 7-12. Yahweh has judged the insolent temper of Egypt.

Who is this advancing like the Nile, whose waters are tossing like torrents? Egypt advances like the Nile, his waters are tossing like torrents. He thought: Advancing I will cover the world, I will swallow up its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Rear, ye horses, let the chariots dash furiously and let the heroes march. Cush and Put<sup>3</sup> with their shields, the Lydians with bent bow. But this day is a day of Yahweh Tsebaoth, a day of vengeance for revenge on His opponents. His sword<sup>4</sup> shall devour till it is satisfied, and drink its fill of their blood. For Yahweh Tsebaoth has a sacrifice in the North country beside Euphrates. Up into Gilead and fetch balm, my lady Egypt; in vain you multiply remedies, for you there is no healing. The nations have heard your cry, your wail fills the world, for hero has clashed with hero and both have collapsed together.

After these more satisfactory oracles follows a number of fragments, which have been provided with another heading.

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit "I have seen."

<sup>2</sup> With LXX omit "a city and."

<sup>3</sup> Probably Ethiopians and Lybians.

<sup>4</sup> So with LXX.

xlvi. 13. The message delivered by Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet as to the coming of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, to conquer Egypt.

One or two may have been uttered by Jeremiah, but they seem to reflect the attitude of the Jewish colony in Egypt and more probably have come from it.

(c) xlv. 14, 15. Announce in Migdol, proclaim in Memphis,<sup>1</sup> say: To your feet, and make ready, for the sword is devouring on every side. Why has Apis run away? Your bullock-god could not make a stand, because Yahweh overturned it.

(d) xlv. 16, 17. The foreigners among you<sup>2</sup> stumble and fall; then they say to each other: Up and let us get back to our own people and our native land from the destroying sword. Give a new name to Pharaoh of Egypt—the boaster who is never up to time.

(e) xlv. 18, 19. By My life, oracle of the King whose name is Yahweh Tsebaoth, like Tabor towering<sup>3</sup> among the mountains, like Carmel by the sea he comes. Prepare baggage for your exile, lady Egypt who sit so quietly, for Memphis shall become a waste, burned out, uninhabited.

(f) xlv. 20. Egypt is a fair heifer, a gadfly from the North has reached her.

(g) xlv. 21-24. Her hired troops are like calves fattened for the butcher; they too have turned and fled without resistance, because the day of their doom, the time of their punishment, has arrived. The noise of her is like that of a falling forest,<sup>4</sup> for men arrive in force and advance against her like woodcutters, axe in hand. Hew down her forest, oracle of Yahweh, because it is impenetrable, but her foes are more abundant

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX omit some turgid clauses.

<sup>2</sup> The correction is based on the LXX. But the text through the little oracle has suffered severely in transmission. I cannot pretend that the translation, especially that offered of verse 17, represents more than a possible rendering.

<sup>3</sup> I have added "towering" to bring out the sense.

<sup>4</sup> Something is wrong here, for MT "serpent" gives no sense in itself and does not suit the context. I have borrowed a suggestion which does both.



than any locust swarm, are indeed beyond numbering. Lady Egypt is put to shame, delivered as she is into the power of the Northern nation.

(b) xlv. 25. Speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: I am about to punish Amon in No [Thebes], Pharaoh also and all who rely on him.<sup>1</sup>

(i.) xlv. 26. I will deliver them into the power of those who seek their life, into the power of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon and his servants; afterwards Egypt<sup>2</sup> shall be settled as of old, oracle of Yahweh.

xlvi. 27, 28. Have been already translated at xxx. 10, 11.

70. *An oracle on the Philistines, which has also been provided with a heading.*

xlvi. The message of Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet about the Philistines before Pharaoh conquered Gaza.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Waters are advancing from the North and shall become a sweeping torrent. They shall submerge the world and all that is in it, towns and those who inhabit them; mankind shall wail and those who inhabit the world shall shriek. At the noise of the clattering hoofs of his chargers, at the rush of his chariots, at the turmoil of his wheels fathers do not turn back for their children, for their strength has grown limp in the day which is at hand to make all the Philistines a prey, to cut off every ally left from Tyre and Sidon, for Yahweh is laying waste what survives of the Island Caphtor.<sup>3</sup> Gaza shaves its head, Ascalon is made desolate, how long must you, the last of the Anakim,<sup>4</sup> make cuttings in your flesh?

Ah, sword of Yahweh, how long will it be before you come to quiet? Return to your sheath, be at rest, stir no more. How can it come to quiet, when Yahweh has given it orders? He has set as its end Ascalon and the sea-coast.

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<sup>1</sup> Text uncertain. The above translation is based on LXX.

<sup>2</sup> I have added "Egypt."

<sup>3</sup> From which, according to Amos, the Philistines came. To make the meaning clear, some one added to M<sup>t</sup>, "i.e., the Philistines."

<sup>4</sup> So with LXX, cf. Josh. xi. 12.

71. *xlvi. A collection of oracles on Moab, which seems to have existed at one time in an independent form, for it is provided with a formal heading and close. Several of the oracles appear again in a similar collection which has been inserted in our Book of Isaiah at chapters xv.-xvi. One is borrowed from Balaam's oracles against Moab in Numbers, a second appears in Isaiah with no reference to Moab, while two reappear in chapter xlix. of our book, but are there referred to Edom. In these circumstances it is exceptionally difficult to decide which, if any, were uttered by Jeremiah.*

*It may be added that the text is generally very bad, that local allusions which we do not understand abound, and that several of the oracles are mere fragments.*

#### On Moab.

(a) *xlvi. 1-5.* This has only a general likeness to Isa. xv.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: Woe to Nebo for it is ravaged, Kiriathaim after its capture is covered with shame, Ar Moab<sup>1</sup> is covered with shame and dismay.

The glory of Moab has ceased, evil schemes have been planned against it. "Come and let us blot it out of being as a people."<sup>2</sup> Madmen must collapse, the sword is drawn against it. Hark! from Horonaim rises the cry: "Havoc and utter ruin." Moab is broken, its cry can be heard as far as Zoar.<sup>3</sup> Men climb the pass to Luhith in tears, at the descent of Horonaim a wail over their ruin can be heard.

(b) *xlvi. 6-9.* It is Moab's insolent temper which makes her judgment so sure and so severe.

Flee, rescue your lives, become like a shrub in the open desert. Because you trusted in yourselves and your wealth, you too shall be captured; Chemosh with its priests and chiefs shall go into exile. The destroyer shall enter every town, nor shall Ar Moab escape; the valley shall be wasted, the plateau be ruined; its towns shall become an uninhabited wilderness.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Or read "the bulwark," i.e., Nebo and Kiriathaim are regarded as the bulwark of Moab.

<sup>2</sup> Uncertain text. The above claims no more than to make sense.

<sup>3</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>4</sup> Some one added in the margin a quotation from an unknown song or prophecy, "as Yahweh said: Give wings to Moab, for she would fain fly away."

(c) xlviii. 10. A grim cry for vengeance, from some time when Moab was a bitter foe to Israel.

Cursed be the man who does Yahweh's work slackly ; cursed be he who withholds his sword from blood.

(d) xlviii. 11-13. Moab's self-reliance and long-continued good fortune.

Moab has been at ease through all its history, resting quietly on its lees, never poured from jar to jar.<sup>1</sup> Hence its flavour has endured unaltered, its scent has never known change. Therefore days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will send those who shall pour it into new casks [?], emptying its old jars, destroying its wine-skins. Then Moab shall be disappointed with Chemosh, as Israel was disappointed with Bethel in which it put its trust.

(e) xlviii. 14, 15. Moab is ruined in its proud self-confidence.

How can you say, Heroes are we all and men apt for war ? The destroyer of Moab and of its towns has advanced ; the flower of its young men are brought down to slaughter, oracle of the King, whose name is Yahweh Tsebaoth.

(f) xlviii. 16-25. Significant here is the sympathy felt with Moab in its fate.

Calamity draws near for Moab, its catastrophe comes hasting on. Let all its neighbours lament its fate, and all who recognise its fame say, how is the strong staff, the glorious sceptre broken ! Come down from your state and sit on the ground,<sup>2</sup> you who inhabit Dibon, for he who despoils Moab is advancing against you and has broken down your bulwarks. Post yourselves on the highway and peer down the road, you who inhabit Aroer, question any fugitive or runaway, ask what has happened. Moab is covered with disgrace because of its ruin ; wail and lament, make it known in Arnon that Moab is despoiled. Judgment has reached the plateau, Holon and Jahaza, Mephaath and Dibon, Nebo and Beth Diblathaim, Kiriathaim and Bethgamul, Bethmeon and Kerioth, Bozrah and all the towns of Moab far and near. The horn of Moab is humbled, its arm is broken. Oracle of Yahweh.

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<sup>1</sup> Some one added, in order to explain the metaphor taken from the treatment of wine, i.e., "it never went into exile."

<sup>2</sup> M'T is hopeless : but the above can only claim to be a suggestion.

(g) xlviii. 26, 27.

Make him drunk,<sup>1</sup> for he magnified himself against Yahweh; he clapped his hands in mockery,<sup>2</sup> but will himself be laughed to scorn. Was Israel an object for your mockery, or had he been caught by you among thieves that, so often as you talked about him, you wagged your head in scorn?

(h) xlviii. 28.

Forsake the towns, live among the rocks, you inhabitants of Moab, become like a dove which makes its nest . . .<sup>3</sup>

(i) xlviii. 29-31. This appears in Isaiah xvi. 6, 7 in a slightly different form.

We have heard of the pride of haughty Moab, his insolence, his pride, his arrogance, his lordly mind. I know, oracle of Yahweh, his furious temper, his empty talk, his empty deeds. Therefore I must wail over Moab, and lament over it all, I groan over the fate of the men of Kirheres.

(j) xlviii. 32, 33. See again Isaiah xvi. 9, 10.

Along with Jazer I weep over you, O vine of Sibmah. Your branches once stretched over the sea, reaching as far as Jazer; now the spoiler has descended on your crop and vintage. Joy and gladness shall be no more in the fruitful fields and land of Moab; I will cause wine to fail in the wine-vats; no one shall tread the grapes any more.<sup>4</sup>

(k) xlviii. 34. This appears in more intelligible form in Isa. xv. 4-6. Only one clause here seems to give sense—"for even the waters of Nimrim shall become wastes."

(l) xlviii. 35, 36. Verse 36 is found also at Isa. xvi. 11, to which has been added a sentence from Isa. xv. 7.

I will bring to an end in Moab, oracle of Yahweh, all worshippers and every one who sacrifices to its idols. Therefore my mind wails like a flute over Moab, my mind wails like a flute over the men of Kirheres. Therefore the abundance he has made has come to nothing.

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<sup>1</sup> With the cup of the divine anger.

<sup>2</sup> So with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> Hopeless text.

<sup>4</sup> The last clause is probably a correction made in the margin.

(m) xlviii. 37, 38. Appears in slightly different form at Isa. xv. 2, 3.

Every head is shaved, every beard is cut close, cuttings are made in men's hands, sackcloth is laid on their loins. On all the roofs of Moab and in the open spaces of its towns is universal mourning, for I have broken Moab as one breaks a useless dish, oracle of Yahweh.

(n) xlviii. 39.

How Moab is ruined—take up your lament—how it is defeated and shamed. Moab becomes an object of mixed scorn and awe to all its neighbours.

(o) xlviii. 40, 41. Verses 40, 41*b*, are omitted by LXX and reappear xlix. 22, where they are ascribed to Edom.

Thus speaks Yahweh : like an eagle shall he swoop and spread out his wings over Moab. The towns are captured, the fortresses surprised ; because of trouble the courage of Moab's heroes in that day becomes like the courage of a woman.

(p) xlviii. 42.

Moab will be so ruined as to cease to be a nation for it magnified itself against Yahweh.

(q) xlviii. 43. 44. This oracle, here applied to Moab, appears in Isa. xxiv. 17, but is there applied to the inhabitants of the whole world.

Terror, a ditch and a snare threaten you, O inhabitant of Moab, oracle of Yahweh. The man who runs to escape the terror tumbles into the ditch ; when he climbs out of the ditch, he is caught in the snare, for I am bringing on Moab the year of its punishment. Oracle of Yahweh.

(r) xlviii. 45, 46. This oracle, omitted by LXX, is made up of Numb. xxi. 28 ; xxiv. 17*b*, two oracles uttered by Balaam against Moab. Perhaps it has been added by some one who wished to say that the first doom pronounced against Moab, delayed though it has been, shall yet be proved true.

Refugees halt powerless beside Heshbon, but out of Heshbon fire leaps and a flame from Sihon's palace, it has devoured the brows of Moab and the scalp of this arrogant people. Woe to you, Moab ; the people of Chemosh is undone, your sons have been carried away captives and your daughters led away prisoners.

(s) xlviii. 47.

Yet in the consummation of all things, oracle of Yahweh, I will turn the fortune of Moab. Thus far the doom of Moab.

72. *This oracle on Ammon may have originally consisted of verses 1, 4-6. Into it were intruded quotations from Amos, especially Amos i. 15, and an enigmatic verse no. 3. The last is difficult in text, so that the translation offered must be recognised as merely tentative. But it is further difficult in substance, for one does not see what Heshbon, a Moabite town, has to do with Ammon.*

xlix. 1-6. On the Ammonites.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Has Israel no sons, no heir of its own? Why then does Milkom<sup>1</sup> possess Gad, and Milkom's people live in its towns? Therefore, days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will raise the battle-cry against Ammon's capital city, and it shall become a heap of ruins, and its dependent towns shall be burned down, and Israel shall possess those who now possess it, speaks Yahweh. Wail, O Heshbon, you are ruined; cry aloud, daughter-towns of Rabbath, put on sack-cloth and mourn, making cuttings in your flesh, for Milkom with his priests and chiefs goes away into captivity.

Why do you boast of your valleys,<sup>2</sup> you who dwell in security,<sup>3</sup> bragging thus of your wealth; "Who can ever rival me?" I will bring terror to your door, oracle of Yahweh Tsebaoth, from all your neighbours, and you shall be scattered, every man going his own way with none to gather you in your flight.

Afterwards, however, I will turn the fortune of the Ammonites. Oracle of Yahweh.

73. *xlix. 7-22. In this oracle on Edom there may be an original nucleus, consisting of verses 7-10. The rest seems to consist of broken, scattered material which appears elsewhere, in some places, as in Obadiah, applied to Edom, in other places applied to Moab, to Babylon, and even to Jerusalem.*

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<sup>1</sup> So with LXX, Milkom was the national god.

<sup>2</sup> So with Syr.

<sup>3</sup> Emended text.

(a) xlix. 7-10.

On Edom.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth : There is<sup>1</sup> no longer wisdom in Teman, wise men are wholly at a loss, their wisdom has failed them. Escape into hiding, find a secure dwelling, inhabitants of Dedan, for I have brought upon Esau his calamity, even the time of his punishment. If grape-gatherers descend upon you, they will leave no gleanings ; if night-thieves, they waste all they can.<sup>2</sup> For I am ransacking Esau thoroughly, laying bare his retreats, so that nothing shall remain hidden. His race as well as his friends and neighbours are ruined, there is none to help.

(b) xlix. 11. A remark, the connection and purpose of which in this place are a problem.

I will keep your orphans alive and let your widows rely on me [or Me].

(c) xlix. 12, 13.

Thus speaks Yahweh : Those who were not destined to drink the cup are drinking it, and shall you be freed from the necessity ? You shall not be exempted, but shall drink, for I have taken an oath by Myself, oracle of Yahweh, that Bozrah shall become a waste, an object of contempt, a desert, an object of execration, and all her daughter-towns shall become perpetual ruins.

° (d) xlix. 14-16. Another form of the oracle with which the book of Obadiah opens. I have used the form in which it appears in Obadiah to help out the text.

Tidings have reached me from Yahweh, how He has sent a herald among the nations with the summons : " Gather and march in battle-array against it." I make you small among the peoples and despised among mankind. Your boastful mind has led you astray, living, as you do, in the rock-clefts, holding the hill-crest. Yet, though you nest in high security like an eagle, thence I will bring you down. Oracle of Yahweh.

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<sup>1</sup> With LXX. omit the mark of interrogation.

<sup>2</sup> Also in Obad. v. 5.



(c) xlix. 17. Practically reproduces xix. 8. What is said there of Jerusalem is said here of Edom.

Edom shall become a waste, every casual passer-by shall whistle with amazement at seeing its ruins.

(f) xlix. 18. Applied in l. 40 to Babylon.

Its state shall be like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbouring towns, speaks Yahweh, no man shall live there, no human being shall inhabit it.

(g) xlix. 19-21. Applied in l. 44-46 to Babylon.

Like a lion he is climbing out of the valley of Jordan against the enduring sheepfold, for suddenly I will expel them thence and appoint whomsoever I choose, for who is like Me or who can equal Me, or what shepherd can defend his flock against Me?<sup>1</sup> Listen, therefore, to Yahweh's plans for Edom and His thoughts as to the inhabitants of Teman; their shepherds shall drag them away and their fold shall be startled at their fate. The world trembles at hearing of their collapse, its sound<sup>2</sup> can be heard, a cry like that at the Red Sea.

(b) xlix. 22. Applied in xlviii. 40 to Moab.

74. *The original oracle on Damascus, verses 23-25, was probably connected with the conquest of Damascus by Nebuchadrezzar in 605.*

(a) xlix. 23-25.

On Damascus.

Hamath and Arpad are covered with shame, because they have heard bad news; <sup>3</sup>they are in disquiet like the troubled and restless sea.<sup>3</sup> Damascus, weakened, has turned to escape, terror has seized her, trouble and anguish master her, as they do a woman in childbirth. Woe unto her,<sup>4</sup> the glorious city is forsaken, the delightful town.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the best I can make of an obscure passage.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps "the echo."

<sup>3</sup> Accepting Driver's suggested emendations.

<sup>4</sup> With slight emendation.

(b) xlix. 26. Applied in l. 30 to Babylon.

Therefore her young men fall in her open spaces, and all her fighting men are silenced in that day. Oracle of Yahweh Tsebaoth.

(c) xlix. 27. From Amos i. 4, 14.

I will light a fire in the wall of Damascus, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad.

75. *Oracles against some Eastern peoples, with whom we have no evidence that Jeremiah ever came into connection.*

(a) xlix. 28-30.

On Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor which Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, conquered.

Thus speaks Yahweh: Up, attack Kedar and despoil the people of the East. Let them collect their tents and flocks, let them rescue their tent-coverings, their baggage and their camels, let them cry aloud "terror on every side." Escape into hiding, find a secure dwelling, inhabitants of Hazor, oracle of Yahweh, for Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, has a plan for you and a thought as to you.

(b) xlix. 31, 32.

Up, attack a nation which lives in security and dwells in quiet, oracle of Yahweh, which has neither doors nor bars, so lonely is its abode. Their camels shall be a spoil, their abundant flocks a prey, and I will scatter to every wind the crop-haired people, and from every direction I will bring ruin on them. Oracle of Yahweh.

(c) xlix. 33.

Hazor shall become a haunt of jackals, a perpetual waste; no man shall live there, nor shall any human being inhabit it.

76. *An oracle on Elam, a people to the East of Babylon, with which it is difficult to suppose that Jeremiah could ever have had any relation.*

xlix. 34-39. The message of Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet as to Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah.

Thus speaks Yahweh 'Tsebaoth : I will break Elam's bow, its mainstay, and I will bring against Elam four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and I will scatter them to those four winds ; there shall not be a nation to which waifs from Elam shall not come. And I will make them tremble before their enemies who seek their life, and will bring upon them disaster, even My fierce anger, oracle of Yahweh, and I will send the sword in pursuit till they are annihilated. And I will set up My throne in Elam, destroying out of it king and chiefs. Oracle of Yahweh.

But in the consummation of all things I will turn the fortune of Elam. Oracle of Yahweh.

## 77. *A long series of oracles on Babylon.*

The phrase in the heading which refers the whole to Jeremiah as its author is absent from LXX.

- (a) l. 1-5. The news of Babylon's fall will result in Israel being set free for Yahweh's service. I take this to be a product of the exile.

The message Yahweh uttered about Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet.

Proclaim among the nations, make it known without concealment, declare : Babylon is captured, Bel is put to shame, Merodach is ruined.<sup>1</sup> For a nation has advanced against it from the North, which shall make its land a waste in which neither man nor beast can live. Escape then and go. In those days and at that time, oracle of Yahweh, Israel and Judah, reunited, shall go with tears to seek Yahweh their God. Turning toward Zion, they shall inquire the way, saying : Come, let us join ourselves to Yahweh ; the eternal covenant must not be forgotten.

- (b) l. 6-10. Israel, through being forewarned, shall be the first to escape from ruined Babylon. Also an oracle from the exile.

My people became lost sheep, whose shepherds misled them : they wandered over the hills,<sup>2</sup> up hill and down dale, forgetting their fold. Everyone who fell in with them devoured them as

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<sup>1</sup> I have followed LXX in omitting a number of turgid and explanatory phrases.

<sup>2</sup> So perhaps with LXX and Syr.

he pleased ; their enemies said ; We shall never be brought to book for so doing, since they have sinned against Yahweh, the fold of justice, the hope of their fathers.

Escape now out of Babylon, flee from Chaldea, be like the bell-wethers which head a flock. For I am rousing and leading against Babylon out of the North-land a horde of powerful nations who shall besiege and capture it. They are like a keen sure arrow which does not miss.<sup>1</sup> Chaldea shall be handed over to be spoiled till all who despoil it are satiated. Oracle of Yahweh.

(c) l. 11-13. Addressed to the Babylonians.

You who waste Israel, My peculiar property, may joyfully exult, may gambol like calves at grass, may neigh like stallions ; but the mother who bore you is brought to utter shame. Behold the end of a nation—desert, dry wilderness ! It shall no longer be inhabited because of Yahweh's anger, the whole of it shall be desolation.

(d) l. 14-16. A shout of exultant revenge from the men under Babylon's heel.

You archers, attack Babylon on every side, shoot at her without sparing your arrows, for she has sinned against Yahweh. Raise the battle-cry on every side ; her power is weakening, her turrets crumbling, her walls collapsing. Because this is the vengeance of Yahweh, take full revenge on her ; as she has done, do to her. Cut off from Babylon sower and harvester alike. Before the wasting sword let every man turn back to his own people and flee to his own land.

(e) l. 17-20. The restoration of Israel and Judah from Babylon.

Israel is a stray sheep hunted by lions. First the king of Assyria tore it, then this Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, broke its bones. Therefore, thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel : I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria, and I will restore Israel to its pasture and it shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, it shall feed its fill on Mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days and at that time, oracle of Yahweh, men may hunt for the iniquity of

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<sup>1</sup> Following LXX.

Israel and discover none, or for the sin of Judah and fail to find it, for I will forgive the men I spare.

(f) l. 21-27. A specimen of the temper which is bred in the subject nations by a power like that of Babylon. The more independent in spirit they are, the more sure is the result.

Advance against the land of Merathaim and against the inhabitants of Pekod, slay and exterminate, fulfil all My command to you,<sup>1</sup> oracle of Yahweh. Hark, war is abroad in the land and vast ruin. How thoroughly is the hammer of the whole world broken into fragments; what an object of wonder Babylon has become among the nations! I set a snare for you, O Babylon, and you are taken, surprised, seized. You did not dream that it was with Yahweh you had to deal. Yahweh has opened His arsenal and brought out the weapons of His anger, for He has work in hand in Chaldea. Come against her from every quarter, open her stores, pile up the contents like sheaves, exterminate her so that nothing may survive. Slay all her warriors, bring them out to the slaughter; woe unto them, for the day of their punishment has arrived.

(g) l. 28. Zion always survives Babylon.

Hark to the fugitives who escape from Babylonia, to declare in Zion the vengeance of Yahweh our God, how He avenges His temple.

(h) l. 29-32. Probably four fragments, connected by the tag of "insolence." Verse 30 is already translated at xlix. 26, where it is referred to Damascus.

Summon against mighty Babylon all the archers, besiege her on every side, let none escape. Repay her after her own deeds, do to her as she has done, for she has been insolent against Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel.

I am against you in your insolence, oracle of Yahweh 'Tsebaoth, for your day, the time of your punishment has arrived.

The insolent one shall stumble and fall with none to lift him up, and I will set his towns in an all-devouring blaze.

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<sup>1</sup> LXX makes "the sword" to be addressed in this oracle, perhaps correctly.

(i) l. 33, 34. Israel and Judah represent an enslaved world.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth : Israel and Judah are both oppressed, those who enslave them have laid firm hold on them, refusing to let them go. But He who vindicates them is strong : His name is Yahweh Tsebaoth, who will make good their cause.

To give peace to the world, He must give dispeace to the Babylonians.

(j) l. 35-40. A curse invoked on Babylon.

A sword against Chaldea, oracle of Yahweh, against the inhabitants of Babylon, its chiefs and its sages ! A sword against its soothsayers and they shall become fools. A sword against its warriors and they shall be in terror. A sword against its horses and cavalry, against its vast population,<sup>1</sup> and they shall become women. A sword against its treasures, and they shall be made a prey. A sword<sup>2</sup> against its waters and they shall dry up. For it is a land of idols where men delight in images. Therefore wild cats shall haunt with jackals, and ostriches [?] shall dwell there ; it shall never again be inhabited, nor shall it be occupied for ever and ever.

l. 41-43 is practically the same as vi. 22-24.

l. 44-46. Applied in xlix. 19-21 to Edom.

(k) li. 1-6.

Thus speaks Yahweh : I am rousing against Babylon and the inhabitants of Chaldea a destroyer, and I will send against Babylon winnowers who shall empty the country because they were against her<sup>3</sup> on every side in her evil day. Let the archer bend his bow and put on his breast-plate ; let no mercy be shown to her young men, exterminate her entire army ; let them fall dead in Chaldea and mortally wounded in its streets, for their land is full of crime against the Holy One of Israel ; but Israel and Judah are not destitute of a protector, even their God Yahweh Tsebaoth. Escape, let every man save

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<sup>1</sup> With a slight emendation.

<sup>2</sup> So with Syr.

<sup>3</sup> MT may mean by "her" Jerusalem. Perhaps, however, we should read with LXX "woe unto her, i.e., Babylon, on every side in the evil day."

himself out of Babylon, do not perish in her guilt, for this is Yahweh's day of vengeance, He is repaying her her due.

(l) li. 7-10. Probably an oracle from Babylon.

Babylon was a cup of golden wine in Yahweh's hand, making all the world drunk; the nations drank her wine till they reeled in frenzy. In a moment Babylon is fallen into ruin, wail over her. Bring medicine, if by any chance her hurt may be healed. We have done our best for Babylon, but she is incurable; leave her and go, every man to his own land, for her doom towers to heaven and touches the very clouds. Yahweh has made good our cause; come therefore, and let us relate in Zion the work of Yahweh our God.

(m) li. 11-14. It is Yahweh and no mere human victor, who is destroying Babylon. The oracle shows the thoughts stirred in Jewry by the rise of Cyrus.

<sup>1</sup>Polish the arrows, fill the quivers.<sup>1</sup> Yahweh has roused the king of the Medes, for His mind is set on destroying Babylon; this is Yahweh's vengeance, the vengeance He takes for His Temple. Against Babylon's walls raise a standard, make strong the guard, appoint sentinels, prepare ambushes, for the plan Yahweh formed He is now carrying into effect against the inhabitants of Babylon. You who dwell beside many waters, mistress of wealth, your end has come, the web of your destiny is finished. Yahweh Tsebaoth has sworn by Himself . . .<sup>2</sup> they will raise a shout against you.

li. 15-19. This section has already appeared, x. 12-16, where it is more in place.

(n) li. 20-24. Probably addressed to Cyrus and showing, like (m), the thoughts roused by Cyrus' victories.

The conqueror is an instrument in Yahweh's hand.

You are My hammer and weapon of war, by you I will smash nations and destroy kingdoms, by you I will smash horse and rider, by you I will smash chariot and charioteer, by you I will smash man and woman, old and young, young man and maiden, by you I will smash shepherd and flock, the farmer and

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<sup>1</sup> The general sense of the sentence is clearly as I have rendered it. The details are difficult and uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> I give up this sentence as hopeless.



his team, by you I will smash satraps and viceroys. And so I will repay to Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all the harm they have done in your sight to Zion. Oracle of Yahweh.

(o) li. 25, 26. If this was meant for Babylon, it was uttered by someone who did not know the flat alluvial plain of Euphrates. Probably it was originally directed against a place like Edom.

I am against you, mount of destruction, destroyer of the world, oracle of Yahweh, and I will stretch out My hand against you, rolling you down from your rocks and turning you into a burned-out heap, out of which no man can dig a corner-stone or a stone for a foundation since you shall be ruinous heaps for ever. Oracle of Yahweh.

(p) li. 27-32. The capture of Babylon.

Raise a standard in the world, blow a trumpet among the nations, enlist peoples for war against her, summon kingdoms—Ararat, Minni, Ashkenaz, marshal a host [?], bring cavalry in swarms like locusts. Enlist peoples for war against her, the king of Media, his satraps and governors and all the country under his control. The world trembles in dismay because now is being realised the purpose of Yahweh to turn Babylonia into an uninhabited waste. Babylon's fighting men have given up the struggle, they sit still inside the forts, their strength is exhausted, they have become women. Courier posts after courier, messenger after messenger, to inform the king of Babylon that his city is overrun on every side, its houses are on fire, its gates burst through, the fords are surprised, . . .<sup>1</sup> are burned, the men of war are in utter dismay.

(q) li. 33.

Thus speaks Yahweh Tsebaoth, God of Israel: Lady Babylon is like a threshing-floor stamped hard for the harvest work; yet a little, and the harvester will arrive.

(r) li. 34-37. The complaint of Zion and its issue.

Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured and consumed us, has left us like an empty jar, has swallowed us like a dragon,

<sup>1</sup> Something is wrong here. M<sup>T</sup> reads "pools," but, as you can't burn pools, another word is needed.

filling his belly, has torn us from all our ease. O Zion, cry, "havoc and ruin"<sup>1</sup> against Babylon; O Jerusalem, cry, "My blood be on the inhabitants of Chaldea." Therefore thus speaks Yahweh: I am undertaking your cause and I will take revenge for you; I will dry up her sea and make dry her life-springs. Babylon shall become a heap of stones, a haunt of jackals, an object of wonder and contempt, empty of people.

(s) li. 38-40. An end is set to the greed of Babylon.

They all used to roar like lions, growling like lions' whelps. I will poison<sup>2</sup> their banquets, and make them drunk so as to stupefy<sup>3</sup> them; and they shall sleep the eternal sleep which has no waking. Oracle of Yahweh.

I will bring them down, like lambs, rams or he-goats to the slaughter.<sup>4</sup>

(t) li. 41-44a. Judgment on Babylon and on its god Bel.

How Babylon is captured, the glory of the world surprised! What an object of wonder it has become among the nations! The sea has swept over Babylon and buried it in the rush of its waves. Its towns have become a waste, a dry and barren land, where no man can live, nor does any human being pass through. I will punish Bel in Babylon, wrenching his prey out of his jaws, and nations shall no more stream to him.

(u) li. 44b-48. This oracle, omitted by LXX, seems very late, using Babylon practically as a symbol for heathenism. It may, however, be a few fragments.

The walls of Babylon are fallen. Leave her then, my people, let every man save his life from the fierce anger of Yahweh. Let not your courage grow faint, and have no fear before the rumours flying through the world. Every year will have its rumour of "havoc" in the world; and of tyrant set against tyrant.

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<sup>1</sup> An emended text to make sense.

<sup>2</sup> With Syr.

<sup>3</sup> With LXX.

<sup>4</sup> Probably secondary, limping lamely after the more vivid original.

Therefore days are coming when I shall punish the idols of Babylon and all its land shall be put to shame and its dead shall fall in heaps within it.

Heaven and earth and all that is in them shall exult over Babylon because out of the North a destroyer is coming against it. Oracle of Yahweh.

(v) li. 49-51. A summons to Israel in Babylon and its reply.

Babylon is about to fall, ye slain of Israel; yea, Babylon is about to fall, ye slain of the world.<sup>1</sup> Ye who have escaped the sword, haste, make no delay, far-off though you are, remember Yahweh and recall Jerusalem to your memory. "We are ashamed because we have heard of an outrage; shame has covered our faces, because strangers have entered the holy places of the temple."

(w) li. 52-53, 54-57. Two threats against Babylon.

Therefore days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will punish her idols, and in all her land the mortally wounded shall moan. When Babylon towers to heaven and makes strong and high her defence, spoilers sent by Me shall come against her. Oracle of Yahweh.

Hark, a cry from Babylon, a vast crash from Chaldea, because Yahweh is despoiling Babylon and putting an end to its loud hum. <sup>2</sup>He roars against it like mighty waters and utters His voice with threatening.<sup>2</sup> A destroyer advances against Babylon, its fighting men are prisoners, their bow is broken, for Yahweh is a God of recompense who does not fail to repay. So I will make drunk its chiefs, its wise men, its governors, viceroys and fighting men, and they shall sleep the eternal sleep which has no waking. Oracle of the King, whose name is Yahweh 'Tsebaoth.

(x) li. 58. "Vanity of vanities."

Thus speaks Yahweh 'Tsebaoth: The broad wall of Babylon is broken down and its lofty gates are being burned; so nations toil for nothing and peoples weary themselves to feed the flames.

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<sup>1</sup> I hesitate over this translation and prefer to mark it as dubious.

<sup>2</sup> An emended text.

(y) li. 59-64. A late addition after the oracles on Babylon had been collected.

The message with which Jeremiah the prophet charged Seraiah ben Neriah ben Maasciah when he went with<sup>1</sup> Zedekiah, king of Judah, to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign, now Seraiah was quarter-master.

Jeremiah wrote in a book the doom which was to befall Babylon, viz., all the preceding messages against Babylon, and he charged Seraiah: When you reach Babylon, be sure to read all these messages and say: Yahweh, Thou hast pronounced against this place that it is to be cut off so that neither man nor beast can live in it any more, since it is to become a perpetual waste. Then, when you have finished reading this book, you must fasten a stone to it and fling it into the Euphrates, saying, so shall Babylon sink and never rise again, because of the doom which I am bringing upon it.<sup>2</sup>

78. *lii. The chapter has nothing directly to do with Jeremiah and is extracted with certain modifications, from 2 Kings xxiv. 8-25, 30.*

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old on his accession and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamital bath Jeremiah of Libnah, and he did evil before Yahweh, exactly as Jehoiakim had done. Indeed, through the anger of Yahweh, matters went so far in Jerusalem and Judah towards His casting them away out of His presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. Accordingly, in the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of his reign, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, advanced with his whole army against Jerusalem and they pitched camp against it and surrounded it with a siege-wall. The siege continued until the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, in which year, on the ninth day of the fourth month, famine became very severe in the city

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps read with LXX "from."

<sup>2</sup> The last clause of the verse is a marginal note. Someone who wished to separate the oracles from the historical chapter lii. added: "The oracles of Jeremiah extend only as far as 'they weary themselves,' i.e., only as far as the last Hebrew word in verse 58."

so that food failed the common people. A breach was then made into the city, and the whole garrison, leaving the city, fled by night through the gate between the two walls beside the royal garden, while the Chaldeans surrounded the city. They made for the Arabah, but the Chaldean army pursued them<sup>1</sup> and overtook Zedekiah at the plains of Jericho; whereupon his whole force scattered. So they seized the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, in the country of Hamath, who pronounced sentence on him. The king of Babylon had Zedekiah's sons executed in his presence; he also executed all the chiefs of Judah at Riblah. He further put out Zedekiah's eyes and brought him in chains of brass to Babylon, keeping him there in prison till his death.

On the tenth day of the fifth month—it was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, chief of the bodyguard, one of the king of Babylon's officers, entered Jerusalem. He burned the temple and the palace and<sup>2</sup> the houses of the leading men.<sup>2</sup> The Chaldean army at his orders also broke down the entire walls of Jerusalem.

Then Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard took into exile<sup>2</sup> the rest of the people left in the city,<sup>2</sup> those who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the surviving artisans. He left, however, some of the humbler people as vine-dressers and crofters.

Then the Chaldeans broke the brass pillars, laver-bases and sea belonging to the temple, and carried the brass of which they were made to Babylon. They also took away the pots, shovels, sprinklers, basins, pans, in fact, all the brass vessels used in the divine service. Besides, the captain of the bodyguard took away the cups, fire-pans, sprinklers, pots, candlesticks, pans, bowls—whatever was of gold, as gold and whatever was of silver, as silver. As for the two pillars, the sea,<sup>3</sup> the laver-bases which king Solomon had made for the temple, the brass of which these articles were made was not weighed. The

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<sup>1</sup> M'T has "the king."

<sup>2</sup> There is confusion in the M'T here. The above translation rests on an emended text.

<sup>3</sup> With 2 Kings xxv. 16, omit the "24 oxen." These, according to 2 Kings xvi. 17, had already been removed by Ahaz.

height of each pillar was eighteen cubits and the circumference was twelve cubits ; they were hollow with walls [?] four fingers thick. Each carried a capital of brass, five cubits high, which was ornamented with network and pomegranates, also made of brass. The pomegranates were ninety-six<sup>1</sup> . . . ; all the pomegranates which surrounded a capital were 100 in number.

The captain of the bodyguard further took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three threshold-keepers ; and out of the city<sup>2</sup> he took an officer set over the fighting men and seven men from the intimate councillors of the king, who were discovered in the city, and the secretary of the commander in chief who enrolled the common soldiers, and sixty of the people of the land, found in the city. After taking these, Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard, brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and the king of Babylon had them executed at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away captive from its country.

The following is the sum total of the population which Nebuchadrezzar took away captive. In the seventh year 3,023 Jews ; in Nebuchadrezzar's eighteenth year 832 from Jerusalem ; in Nebuchadrezzar's twenty-third year, Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard, took captive 745 Jews ; the total, 4,600.

In the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, Evil Merodach, king of Babylon, in the year of his accession showed favour to Jehoiachin, and, having freed him from prison, treated him kindly and honoured him more highly than other kings who were beside him in Babylon. Jehoiachin took off his prison clothes and ate bread at the royal table for the rest of his life ; and everything needed for his support was supplied daily to him by the king of Babylon, so long as he lived.

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<sup>1</sup> Evidently something has fallen out of the text.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., as contrasted with the temple personnel ; one might translate "from the laity."

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BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH.  
Edited by G. Currie Martin, M.A., B.D., and T. H. Robinson, M.A., D.D.

NUMBER FOUR.

# THE BOOKS OF RUTH AND JONAH

TRANSLATED INTO COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH BY  
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## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE modern translations that exist of parts or of the whole of the Old Testament are, as a rule, too expensive and too scholarly for the ordinary reader. In the case of the New Testament excellent help has been afforded by many recent translators, notably by Dr. Moffatt. In a wide experience among working men and women we have found frequent requests for a simple version of the Old Testament in similar language to that employed in the modern versions of the New Testament. By the generous help of our colleagues in this enterprise we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship.

Literary elegance has been sacrificed to clearness of expression and simplicity of language. In the present book the two charming stories gain much from the more familiar style of language, and from being presented in the narrative form to which we are accustomed in modern books.

We can now definitely promise a continuance of this series, and further issues will follow shortly. We are grateful for the reception given to those already issued, and have tried to benefit by many helpful criticisms received for which we are thankful.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed by us.

G.C.M.

T.H.R.

NOTE.—Throughout the footnotes, LXX denotes the Septuagint, i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made from a Hebrew text between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era; and MT the Massoreic Text, i.e., the traditional Hebrew text.

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# THE BOOKS OF RUTH AND JONAH

IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH.

## *GENERAL INTRODUCTION.*

### *TEXT.*

THE Books of Ruth and Jonah, like the rest of the Old Testament, were written in Hebrew. Ancient Hebrew writing was very hard to read. Only the consonants were written, as in some modern systems of shorthand, and the vowels had to be supplied by the reader as he went along. Again, just as in old English or in German, long “f” is easily confused with “f,” so in Hebrew some of the consonants, such as “d” and “r,” had such similar forms that it was hard to distinguish them, especially in words unfamiliar to the copyist. That is why far more errors have crept into the poetical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament than into such straightforward stories as Ruth and Jonah. A further difficulty was that the writing read straight on, like some children’s letters, every word all capitals, with no divisions between the separate words or sentences or paragraphs, with no punctuation marks or inverted commas, and with the lines very close together. In one respect, moreover, it was quite unlike any European writing because it read from right to left instead of from left to right.

But the great reverence of the copyists for what they were copying largely transcended these difficulties. The books of Ruth and Jonah are in an excellent state of preservation, and the few errors can usually be detected and corrected by comparing the Hebrew with the Septuagint, that is, the Bible of the Greek-speaking Jews, or some other version.

One point of difference between the traditional Hebrew text (the Massoretic text, indicated as MT) and the Septuagint (indicated as LXX), is the position of the Book of Ruth in the Canon. The Jews divided their Scriptures into three sections, first the legal and historical books, then the Prophets, and last

the miscellaneous and mostly later "Writings." Our English Bible followed the Septuagint (LXX) in placing Ruth alongside Judges, among the historical books; but MT put it amongst the "Writings." As this was probably its original position, it affords a strong argument for a late date. Its inclusion in the Canon at all, apart from its intrinsic beauty, "was doubtless due to its connexion by the genealogy with David, just as Ecclesiastes was made canonical for its supposed connexion with Solomon."

*Translation :*

The following translations are an attempt to lower the barriers between the modern English reader and the meaning and message of two of the most beautiful books in the Old Testament. They can lay no claim to the sonorous and dignified beauty of our familiar versions, which, however, too often convey a sense of remoteness from present-day speech and problems. The constant aim of the translator has been to find the words which would in some measure reproduce for the English reader the same impression that the original stories made on their first hearers.

# THE BOOK OF RUTH

## INTRODUCTION.

### *Scope and Purpose of the Book.*

The Book of Ruth is the exquisitely told tale of a Moabite woman who, moved by love for her mother-in-law, left the home and faith of her own people and migrated to Bethlehem, where, through her marriage with Boaz, a relative of her first husband, she became the ancestress of David, the greatest king in Hebrew history.

Emphasis is continually laid throughout the story on the Moabite nationality of Ruth. In order to appreciate this insistence it must be remembered that the Deuteronomic Code excluded any Moabite from communion with the Jews. "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the Assembly of the Lord ; even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the Assembly of the Lord for ever" (Deut. xxiii. 3). This prohibition became of great practical importance after the return from the Exile. The Jews left behind in Palestine had freely intermarried with their heathen neighbours, and Ezra and Nehemiah, the leaders of the returning "Zionists," quoted this passage to justify their unsparing condemnation of such marriages. (Ezra ix. and x. and Nehemiah xiii. 23-31). It is easy to appreciate the passionate desire to keep Israel a holy nation, undefiled by contact with heathenism, but the harshness with which Ezra and Nehemiah dissolved existing marriages recalls the similar action of another and greater ecclesiastical reformer. The marriage of the Christian clergy had been condemned by the Western Church over and over again before the days of Pope Gregory VII, but he it was who made clerical celibacy an accomplished fact by insisting on the actual separation of husbands and wives. Such an outrage on the deepest instincts of human nature was not carried through without much protest, and it can well be imagined that Ezra's vigorous policy provoked a like revolt. The story of Ruth should be read against that background of gloomy fanaticism. It was a positive reminder, in an age of narrow and bitter patriotism, that one of the noblest heroines



of Hebrew history had been "one of 'em darned furrin wummin," for whom nobody had a good word to say; just as to-day the best rebuke to Anti-Semitism is often a quiet reminder of the nationality of our Lord. Some have objected that so perfect an idyll could have had no ulterior motive, and certainly the polemical aim is well concealed. But the modern conception of "Art for Art's sake" is alien from the Jewish mind, and the Jew has superlatively the gift of making a story the vehicle for the highest spiritual truth. The Parable of the Good Samaritan by the same means conveys the same protest against racial exclusiveness.

The tradition that a foreign woman had been counted worthy to become the ancestress of the Lord's Anointed seems historically trustworthy. As an apologia it would have lost its point had it not been founded on fact; "the proper names in the story do not look like a group invented after the exile"; and the most natural explanation of David's action in placing his parents under the protection of the King of Moab when threatened by Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4) is that he had family ties with Moab.

The marriage of Ruth with Boaz raises another question which has been thought by some to form the motive of the book. The author lays stress on the "commendable piety of a next-of-kin marriage; not necessarily a levirate marriage (Deut. xxv. 5f), for Boaz was not the *levir* or brother-in-law of Ruth's dead husband, but a marriage analogous to it in principle and object." The custom of a man marrying the childless widow of his elder brother to give her a son who was reckoned to the dead man, a custom which provided the puzzle problem set to Jesus by the Sadducees, is of widespread antiquity. This social custom was supported by both economic and religious motives. On the one hand there was the wish to keep in the family that valuable piece of primitive property—a wife; and, on the other, there was the desire, still so deeply engrained in Indian thought, to avoid the calamity of a man dying without leaving behind him a son to perform the sacred funeral rites. This calamity was avoided by a legal fiction such as is often found in primitive codes of law. Sometimes, however, the economic and religious motives might come into conflict. The relative in the story of Ruth is quite prepared to buy in his cousin's

estate to keep it in the family, but draws back when reminded of the further obligation—by now apparently an act of social supererogation—of marrying the widow. For his son would inherit the property as well as the home of his step-father and the real father would enjoy only a temporary usufruct.

It may be noted that the Book of Ruth itself recalls the still more desperate deed of that other childless widow, Tamar, to obtain her rights, when defrauded by Onan. According to the Old Testament genealogies of Ruth iv. 19-22 and 1 Chron. ii. 4-13, and also the genealogy given in Matt. i. 2-16, the sons of both these women, Ruth and Tamar, stood in the direct Davidic line. The Matthean genealogy mentions only two other women as ancestresses of Jesus, Bathsheba, the paramour of David, and Rahab. The latter is apparently to be identified with the prostitute of Jericho, whose assistance to the early invaders of Canaan won her high Rabbinic estimation, and who is here rewarded with the honour of mothering that highly respectable landed proprietor of Bethlehem, none other than Boaz himself! Dr. Moffatt has suggested that the author of a Gospel which sought to persuade Jewish Christians that Christ and His Church were for Gentile as well as Jewish believers, selected these four women for the sake of their foreign origin, Tamar and Rahab being Canaanites, Bathsheba a Hittite by marriage, and Ruth a Moabite. In particular, Ruth's marriage into the Davidic line would typify the admission of the Gentiles into the Kingdom. Others imagine that they were mentioned because they had lain under the same suspicion as the Virgin Mary herself. This theory may be dismissed, and yet there is something akin in the character, though not in the situation, of Ruth with that later mother who, according to this Gospel, also gave birth to her first-born in the little hill-town of Bethlehem.

For Ruth is the most beautiful woman character in the Old Testament. She has given expression to the fidelities of love in words which will endure as long as the world endures. It is easy to love the lovely, but Ruth's devotion was lavished upon a sorrow-stricken and embittered old mother-in-law. She cherished Naomi with large sacrifice, wise forethought and untiring service, until she awakened in the old woman a like self-forgetting affection for the daughter-in-law who was "better to her than seven sons." Her tenderness was balanced

with strength. With gentle firmness she overcame Naomi's objections, nor did her grateful courtesy to Boaz hinder her from insisting on the obligations that he owed the dead. Yet she accepted the advice of her mother-in-law, and her faith in human nature made it possible for her to place herself completely in the power of Boaz. Her faith was not betrayed. Boaz was pious as well as prudent and prosperous; a trifle pompous, maybe, but full of good sense. He met an embarrassing situation with consummate tact. In short, he was one of those stolid, unimaginative, God-fearing men who are so often rewarded with heroic mates. Naomi is a shrewd old peasant woman, able to forget her own sorrows in the desire to do her best for her young daughter-in-law, ready to exploit Ruth's charms in a stratagem akin to Tamar's, but of more prosperous issue, thanks to the sterling character of Boaz.

It is the delineation of these characters by a master hand which earned for the Book of Ruth Goethe's praise as "the loveliest little idyll that tradition has transmitted to us." How great is the relief to turn to these pages from the bloody records of the Book of Judges! Here, amidst the turmoil of social anarchy and the wild acts of tribal hatreds, we find, like the wayside lilies flowering amid the mire of Nazareth, the simple courtesies of country life and the unsoiled beauty of human love. Through the quiet ways of human relationships of fidelity and trust, God was working His purposes out.

### *Author and Date.*

The author of the Book of Ruth is unknown and its date uncertain. Though the story is set in the days of the Judges, it cannot have been written before the period of the monarchy, since its climax is the birth of King David. Probably it belongs to a much later age, when King David, like our King Alfred, had become almost a legendary hero and his figure loomed large through the mists of time. This agrees with the view advanced in an earlier paragraph, that the book was written in opposition to the harsh policy of Ezra and Nehemiah as late as the fifth century B.C., after the Return from the Exile.

# RUTH

In the days when the land was under the Judges, a man from Bethlehem in Judah was forced by famine to emigrate to Moab, along with his wife and his two sons. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's was Naomi, and his two sons were called Mahlon and Chilion,—all Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. On reaching Moab they settled there. Here Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left a widow, with her two sons, who both married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth by name. For about ten years they all lived together there, until both Mahlon and Chilion also died. Then the woman, having lost her two children as well as her husband, set about leaving Moab with the help of her daughters-in-law, for news had reached her while in Moab that Yahweh had taken pity on His people and sent them food. So she left the place where she had been living, and she and her two daughters-in-law took the road to Judah.

"Come, you must both go back to your mother's house," said Naomi to her daughters-in-law. "May Yahweh be as good to you as you have been to the dead and to me. God grant that you may each of you find a home and a husband."

Then she kissed them good-bye, but they burst out crying, and said with tears :

"Oh no ! we will go on with you to your people."

But Naomi said, "Go home, my daughters. Why should you go with me ? Have I any more sons to come who could be your husbands ?<sup>1</sup> Go home, my daughters,<sup>2</sup> for I am too old now to get another husband. Even though I had not given up hope, though I were to get a husband this very night and sons came to me, would you be willing to wait until they were grown-up ? Would you deny yourselves husbands for their sakes ? No, my daughters. I am grievously distressed for you, but the hand of Yahweh has been raised against me."

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<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the custom of levirate marriage, that is the marriage of a childless widow with her brother-in-law (Lat. *Levir*) to secure a son who could be reckoned to the dead man. See Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Omit, with the Syriac and a MS. of LXX, "Go your ways."

At this they burst into tears again and sobbed. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth still clung to her.

“ See,” said Naomi, “ your sister-in-law has gone back to the home and faith of her own people. Will you not follow her back ? ”

“ Entreat me not to leave you nor to go home instead of going with you,” Ruth replied. “ For where you go I will go, and where you stay, I will stay ; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried. May the curse of Yahweh be upon me if aught but death part you and me.”

When Naomi saw that Ruth had made up her mind to go with her she gave up trying to dissuade her. So they went on together until they came to Bethlehem.

Now when they entered Bethlehem the whole city was in a stir about them.

“ Can this be Naomi ? ” the women folk were asking.

But she said to them,

“ Call me no longer by the sweet name of ‘ Naomi,’<sup>1</sup> rather call me by the bitter name of ‘ Mara,’<sup>2</sup> for bitterly indeed has the Almighty dealt with me. I went away full and Yahweh has brought me home again empty. Why call me ‘ Naomi,’ seeing that Yahweh has punished me and the Almighty has afflicted me ? ”

So Naomi came home and her daughter-in-law, Ruth the Moabite, with her,<sup>3</sup> and they reached Bethlehem just as the barley harvest was beginning.

Now there was a kinsman of Naomi’s husband whose name was Boaz. He was well-to-do and belonged to the same clan as Elimelech.

One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi,

“ Let me go down to the harvest-fields and glean among the sheaves behind anyone who is kind enough to give me permission.”

---

<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew the name means “ Pleasant.”

<sup>2</sup> In Hebrew the name means “ Bitter.”

<sup>3</sup> Omit “ who came from Moab ” as a marginal note, accidentally included, perhaps inserted from ii. 6.

“Yes, go, my daughter,” was the reply.

So off she went, and when she came to the fields she began to glean after the reapers, and happened to hit on the field belonging to Boaz, the relative of Elimelech.

Then, as it chanced, Boaz himself came out from Bethlehem and greeted the reapers.

“Yahweh be with you,” he said.

“And may He bless you, too,” they replied.

Then Boaz said to his man in charge of the reapers, “Whose girl is this ? ”

“It’s the Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from Moab,” the man answered. “She asked permission to glean and gather among the shocks after the reapers. So she came and has been busy ever since early morning without a moment’s rest.”<sup>1</sup>

“Listen to me, my girl,” Boaz then said to Ruth, “Do not go gleaning in any other field and do not wander away from here, but keep close to my women. Watch to see which field they are reaping and follow behind them. I have given orders to my young men that they are not to touch you. And when you feel thirsty, go to the water-jugs and help yourself to the water they have drawn.”

Then she flung herself on the ground at his feet and said to him,

“Why have you been so kind to me ? Why should you take so much notice of me whom nobody knows here ? ”

“I have heard all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since her husband’s death,” Boaz said in reply to her, “how you have left your father and mother and your native land to come and live amongst strangers. May Yahweh make it up to you, and may He who is the God of Israel, under whose wings you have now come to take refuge, give you a full reward.”

“I hope I may prove worthy of your kindness, sir,” she said, “for you have cheered and comforted me. Even though I am not one of your servants yet I am at your service.”

At the dinner-hour Boaz said to her,

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<sup>1</sup> MT has “her dwelling in the house is short,” but is probably corrupt. The LXX and the Vulgate suggest that the above translation represents the original sense.

“Come here and help yourself to a piece of bread and dip it into the wine.”

So she sat down alongside the reapers and he<sup>1</sup> passed across to her some popped corn. She ate as much as she wanted and had some left over. When she got up to go on gleaning, Boaz gave orders to his men,

“Let her glean right among the shocks and do not interfere with her. Pull out some ears for her, too, from the bundles. Leave them on the ground for her to glean and do not hinder her.”

So she stayed gleaning in the field until nightfall, when she beat out what she had gleaned, and it came to nearly a bushel of barley. Then she took it with her and went back into the city. After she had shown<sup>2</sup> her mother-in-law her gleanings she brought out the food she had saved and gave it to her.

“Where did you go and glean to-day?” said her mother-in-law to her. “Where were you working? Blessings on the man who took so much notice of you!”

Then Ruth explained to her mother-in-law with whom she had been working, and said,

“Boaz is the name of the man with whom I was working to-day.”

“God bless him,” said Naomi to her daughter-in-law, “Yahweh’s goodness does not fail the living nor the dead!” Then she added, “That man is a relative of ours who has a duty to us.”

“Yes,” rejoined Ruth the Moabite, “and he told me that I was to keep close to his workers until they had finished harvesting.”

“You would do well, my daughter, to stay with his women,” Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “and then you will come to no harm in any other field.”

So Ruth stayed with the women working for Boaz and gleaned until the end of both the barley and wheat harvests and then went back<sup>3</sup> home to her mother-in-law.

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<sup>1</sup> “he” is to be preferred to “they.”

<sup>2</sup> MT has “her mother-in-law saw,” but a slight vowel change improves the sense.

<sup>3</sup> So with Vulgate. MT has “she stayed with.”



One day Naomi said to her daughter-in-law,

“ Shall I not try to find a home for you, my daughter, that you may be properly provided for ? Now how about our relative Boaz, whose women you were with ? See now, he is going to winnow barley to-night down at the threshing-floor. Make yourself look as nice as you can,<sup>1</sup> put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing-floor, but do not let the man know who you are till he has finished supper. Then when he lies down, notice carefully the spot where he is lying. Go in and lift up the covering at his feet and lie down and he will tell you what to do.”

“ I will do as you say,” replied Ruth.

So she went down to the threshing-floor and did just as her mother-in-law had told her. When Boaz had eaten and drunk enough to make him merry he went and lay down on the edge of a heap of corn. Then she crept up stealthily, lifted the covering at his feet and lay down. But in the middle of the night the man started up out of his sleep and, turning suddenly, he saw a woman lying at his feet.

“ Who are you ? ” he said.

“ I am Ruth your servant,” she answered, “ and I ask you to spread your cloak over your servant,<sup>2</sup> for you have a duty by me.”

“ May Yahweh bless you, my girl,” he said, “ for the right feeling you have always shown, especially here, in not going after any of the young men, rich or poor. And now, my girl, have no fear. I will do for you all you ask, since everybody knows you are a virtuous woman. Now it is true that I am a relative, but there is a nearer relative than I. Stop here to-night and then, in the morning, if he is willing to do his duty by you, well and good. Let him do it. But if he will not do his duty by you, then, as God lives, I will do it myself. Lie down again till morning.”

So she lay at his feet until morning. But she got up before it was light enough for anyone to be recognised, as Boaz thought

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew is literally “ Wash and anoint yourself.”

<sup>2</sup> By this symbolic act claiming her as his wife.

it was better that her visit to the threshing-floor should not be known.

“Hand me the wrap you are wearing,” he said. “Now, hold it out.”

And while she held it out he poured into its folds a bushel<sup>1</sup> of barley and helped her on with it again. Then she<sup>2</sup> went back to the city.

When she got home her mother-in-law asked,

“Well,<sup>3</sup> my daughter ? ”

Then Ruth told her how the man had behaved.

“He gave me this bushel of barley,” she said, “for he told me I was not to go back empty-handed to my mother-in-law.”

“Wait quietly, my daughter,” said Naomi, “until you see how it all turns out, for the man will not rest unless he settles the matter this very day.”

Meanwhile Boaz went up to the city gate and sat down there. When he saw go by the relative of whom he had spoken, he called out to him,

“Hi ! you there ! Come over here and sit down.”

He crossed over to him and sat down. Then Boaz asked ten of the city counsellors to sit down along with them. When they had taken their seats he addressed the relative.

“Naomi,” he said, “who has just come back from Moab, has made up her mind to sell the property which belonged to our cousin Elimelech, so I thought I would let you know of it, to give you the chance of publicly buying it in before these counsellors. If you wish to buy it in, do so, but if not,<sup>4</sup> tell me frankly, because I want to know. For no one else has a claim before you, and I come after you.”

“Very well, I wish to buy it in,” he replied.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew “6 measures” perhaps 6 omers, which would be roughly equivalent to a bushel.

<sup>2</sup> MT “he.”

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, “Who are you ? ” meaning “How have you got on ? ”

<sup>4</sup> MT has “if he will not,” an obvious misreading corrected in many MSS and versions.

"When you buy the property from Naomi," went on Boaz, "you must also take Ruth<sup>1</sup> the Moabitess, the widow of the late heir, to keep up the entail on the property of the deceased."<sup>2</sup>

"Then I cannot buy it in," said the relative, "without impoverishing my own estate. You can have my right in the matter, for I do not mean to exercise it myself."

It was an ancient custom in Israel that contracts of buying and selling were sealed by one man taking off his sandal and giving it to the other man. That used to be the custom in Israel.

So the relative took off his sandal as he said to Boaz,

"Buy it for yourself."

Then Boaz addressed the counsellors and everyone else present, saying,

"You are witnesses this day that I have agreed to buy from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have also agreed to take as my wife, to keep up the entail on the property of the deceased so that his line may not die out. To all these things you are witnesses this day.

"We are," they all replied, counsellors included. "God grant that your new bride may be another Rachel or Leah, from whom sprang the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephrathah and your name become renowned<sup>3</sup> in Bethlehem. May this young woman by God's help bring you children who shall make your house famous like the house of Perez,<sup>4</sup> whom Tamar bore to Judah."

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<sup>1</sup> MT has "you must also buy it from Ruth," but the Vulgate and Syriac give the correct sense.

<sup>2</sup> Although the transaction was not a strict levirate marriage, for neither the relative nor Boaz were brothers to Mahlon, yet Boaz's point is that whoever marries Ruth will have only a temporary usufruct in the property as it will pass to their child, who will inherit both the estate and the name of Ruth's first husband. This explains the relative's refusal. In the appended genealogical table, however, Ruth's child is reckoned as the son of Boaz.

<sup>3</sup> MT has "may you proclaim a name," but "may your name be proclaimed" (or become renowned) is supported by the LXX.

<sup>4</sup> Mentioned as ancestor of Boaz : see genealogy.

So Boaz took Ruth into his home. They lived together as man and wife and God blessed them with a son. Then the women neighbours said to Naomi,

“Give thanks to Yahweh, for from to-day He will never again leave you without someone to look after you. May the boy win a name for himself in the history of Israel. He will renew your youth and be the stay of your declining years, for he is the child of your devoted daughter-in-law, who is better to you than seven sons.”

Naomi picked up the child and pressed it to her breast and became its nurse. And her women neighbours said,

“We must give Naomi’s baby a name.” So they called him Obed. And he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

### THE FAMILY TREE OF PEREZ.<sup>1</sup>

PEREZ.  
|  
HEZRON.  
|  
RAM.  
|  
AMMINADAB.  
|  
NAHSHON.  
|  
SALMON.  
|  
BOAZ.  
; |  
OBED.  
|  
JESSE.  
|  
DAVID.

---

<sup>1</sup> A later addition, perhaps borrowed from 1 Chron. ii as it stands. Its aim is to relate David to the house of Judah through Perez, and therefore it reckons Obed as the son of Boaz, whereas from the standpoint of the author of Ruth, he was to be reckoned as the son of Mahlon.

# THE BOOK OF JONAH

## INTRODUCTION.

### *Scope and Purpose of the Book.*

According to this familiar story, the prophet Jonah was commanded by Yahweh, the God of Israel, to preach against Nineveh, capital of the hated Assyrians. His refusal cost him three days inside a great fish. When he obeyed Yahweh's renewed command, it was only to find his prophecy of destruction nullified by the immediate repentance of the Ninevites. Thereupon the disappointed prophet blamed God for His mercy and justified his earlier refusal on the ground that all along he had known God was like that, "gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy," only too ready to let His foes slip through His fingers. But Yahweh reminded Jonah of his own selfish pity for a gourd vine that had afforded him but a noonday's shelter. How much more, then, should God have compassion upon man, the work of His hands ! The babes at their mothers' breasts, nay, the very beasts of the fields, none could be outside the shelter of His love.

Interpreted literally, the story is full of both psychological and physical improbabilities. Besides the miraculous adventure inside the fish, there is a miraculous gourd-vine which springs up in a single night. But, greater miracle than either, the immediate repentance of a vast city follows on a single sentence spoken by an unknown foreigner. The story is clearly not meant to be a record of historical fact. Once this is frankly recognised, all the difficulties about the details of the story melt away. It is as idle to ask whether the whale actually swallowed Jonah as to enquire whether the wolf actually swallowed Red Riding Hood's grandmother. Both incidents belong to the realm of fancy, not of fact. We are in the magic world of folk-lore. But, because the fantastic setting of the Book of Jonah enshrines the highest revelation of the all-embracing love of God which the Old Testament contains, the story may more appropriately be described as a parable than as a mere folk-tale. In spirit as well as in form Jonah takes rank with Jesus's own parables of the Good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son. Man's universal

capacity for repentance, the exclusiveness and intolerance of the self-righteous, the ready response of the sinful, the moral intolerance of a Jew as contrasted with the humanity and spiritual insight of Gentiles, are all illustrated in this little story. But, supremely, the Book of Jonah anticipates the teaching of Jesus on the all-embracing love of the Heavenly Father, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, yet in whose sight one of the least of His little ones is of much more value than many sparrows. Was it in Yahweh's closing appeal to Jonah that Jesus found His favourite argument from human pity to the greater compassion of God? At any rate Jesus knew this story well. When asked for a miraculous sign to authenticate His preaching, He declined, and quoted the moral and spiritual appeal of the preaching of Jonah to Nineveh as the only sort of sign He Himself would give His own generation (see Luke xi. 29, 30, Matt. xvi. 4 and xii. 39 and 41). Matt. xii. 40, which interprets the sign of Jonah as the parallel between the three days and nights spent by Jonah in the fish and those the Son of Man was to spend in the grave, is a gloss which misses the point. There is no suggestion in the story that the Ninevites were aware of, much less influenced by, the wonderful adventures of the prophet. But, further, if the sign of Jonah to Nineveh had been his miraculous escape from the fish and not the spiritual appeal of his preaching, Jesus would hardly have quoted him in support of His refusal to commend His own preaching by a miraculous sign. Jesus used the story as an illustration, as an evangelist might quote the parable of the Prodigal Son. In neither case can such a quotation be adduced as involving any judgment on the historical reality of the story.

As a matter of fact, the adventures related in the Book of Jonah are woven round a real person. The prophet Jonah, son of Amittai, lived a generation before the prophet Amos: but all that history knows of him is that he prophesied to the youthful King Jeroboam II the reconquest of his lands from heathendom (2 Kings xiv. 25ff). Our author probably selected this shadowy prophetic figure as the hero of his parable, because his one association was with a policy of narrow nationalism. The name Jonah means "Dove," often a type of later Judaism, and some would see in the Book of Jonah an elaborate historical allegory in which Jonah stands for "Israel as a whole

in their national reluctance to fulfil their Divine mission to the world." According to this interpretation, Jonah's adventures inside the whale are an allegory of the national Exile into Babylon and the Return. In support of this view they quote Jeremiah, who certainly depicts the Babylonian Exile under the figure of a Dragon first swallowing and then disgorging its prey (chap. li.). It may be granted that Jonah stands, in a general way, for his fellow countrymen, so swift in condemnation of their heathen neighbours, so slow to learn the wider mercies of God; but it is unnecessary to press the identification in detail. The episode of the fish has so many parallels in folk-lore that it is unnecessary to look for an allegorical significance, and the whole story is parable rather than allegory. Like the Book of Ruth, with which it is contemporary, the Book of Jonah was a simple tale, but it had a moral with a very pointed national application.

#### *Author and Date.*

This book is a story about the ninth century prophet, Jonah. It is clearly not written by him. Its unknown author wrote many centuries later, when Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 612 B.C. and its greatness was no more than a legend. The Assyrian monarchs were never known to their contemporaries as Kings of Nineveh; the "King of Nineveh" in the Book of Jonah is simply the conventional king of folk-lore. The author is familiar with Jeremiah's lesson that God's judgments upon the nations were conditional on repentance (see esp. Jer. xviii. 7, 8), and also with the universalist and international teaching of the Great Unknown Prophet of the Exile, who wrote Isaiah, chaps. xl.-lv. The Book of Jonah stands alongside the Book of Ruth, as a protest, under the guise of a story, against the stifling of these loftier views by the narrow nationalism of later Judaism. Its date lies somewhere between 400-200 B.C., when the returned Exiles in Palestine were struggling to maintain their national existence while ringed round with powerful heathen neighbours.

*The Psalm* in chap. ii. interrupts the sequence of the story, and whether or no it is by the author of the rest of the book, it can hardly be in its original position. As a thanksgiving for



deliverance from a literal or figurative death by drowning, it is quite inappropriate to Jonah's position while still in the belly of the fish. The most probable explanation of its intrusion into the story seems to be that some copyist placed it in the margin after ii. 10, as an appropriate expression of Jonah's gratitude for his escape. Then a later copyist noticed that the only mention of the prophet praying occurred while he was still inside the fish (ii. 1) and accordingly shifted the Psalm to that place without considering its appropriateness.

# JONAH

Once upon a time the word of Yahweh came to Jonah, Amittai's son :

"Get up," said Yahweh, "and go to the great city of Nineveh and denounce it ; for its wickedness stinks in my nostrils."

Up got Jonah, but he fled to Tarshish, to get away from Yahweh. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for Tarshish ; he paid his passage and went on board to go with its crew to Tarshish, out of Yahweh's sight. But out at sea Yahweh overwhelmed them with a hurricane, and the sea grew so stormy that the ship seemed to be breaking up. The sailors became panic-stricken, and each of them started crying out to his own god. Then to lighten the ship they threw overboard the ship's cargo. Now Jonah had gone down to the hold. As he was lying there fast asleep the captain came across him and spoke to him.

"What are you doing asleep ? Get up and pray to your God. He might have a thought for us and save us from destruction."

Meanwhile the sailors were saying to one another :

"Come, let us draw lots to find out who is to blame for this disaster."

So they drew lots and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Then they said to him ; "Tell us, pray,<sup>1</sup> what is your business here ? Where do you hail from ? What's your country and people ?"

"I am a Jew," he answered them, "and I am flying<sup>2</sup> from Yahweh, the God of Heaven, the Creator of land and sea."

"What a thing to do<sup>3</sup> !" they exclaimed. "What shall we do with you that we may lay the gale ?" For the sea was growing more and more stormy.

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<sup>1</sup> Omit as a marginal note, accidentally included, "who is to blame for this disaster ?"

<sup>2</sup> MT reads, "I worship Yahweh," but the change of a single letter gives better sense.

<sup>3</sup> Omit as a marginal note, accidentally included, "For the men knew that he was flying from Yahweh, because he had told them so. And they said to him."

“ Take and fling me into the sea,” he said to them. “ Then the sea will be calmed for you, because it is my fault, I know, that this terrible tempest has come down on you.”

The men, however, rowed hard to get back to shore, but all in vain, for they found that the sea was growing more and more stormy. So they called on Yahweh, and said, “ O Yahweh, we ask Thee not to let us suffer for this man’s death, neither hold us blood-guilty. We are innocent. This is Thy doing, O Yahweh, for so it has seemed good to Thee.”

Whereupon they took Jonah and flung him into the sea and the sea became calm.

Then the men were filled with great awe of Yahweh, and with solemn vows they offered sacrifice to Him. Now Yahweh sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah remained inside the fish three days and three nights. While he was inside the fish Jonah prayed to Yahweh his God. And Jonah said :

“ Out of my anguish I called  
To Yahweh and He made answer ;  
From the pit of Sheol I cried  
And Thou didst give ear to my plaint.

Into Ocean’s midst Thou didst fling me  
And round me swirled the flood ;  
Thy breakers were all about me,  
And over me swept Thy tides.

Far from Thy sight, said I,  
Hast Thou not flung me ;  
Yet to the hope I cling,  
Thy holy house once more to see.

In the deadly embrace of the waters  
Was I engulfed by the deep ;  
Round my head were the sea-weeds twining  
Midst the roots of the hills beneath.

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<sup>1</sup> The present position of this Psalm as uttered by Jonah while still inside the fish is inappropriate. A more suitable position would be after the following verse, as the expression of Jonah’s thanksgiving for his deliverance.

Down, down had I gone to that land  
Whose portals are barred for ever ;  
Yet up from the pit Thou didst raise me  
To life again, Yahweh, my God.

When to my fainting soul  
Came the Lord to mind,  
Then did I pray to Thee,  
Within Thy house once more to be.

<sup>1</sup>[Those who set store by vain idols  
Forsake their true refuge.  
But I will sacrifice unto Thee  
With loud thanksgiving ;  
And I will perform what I have vowed.  
To Yahweh belongeth salvation.”]

Then Yahweh spoke to the fish and it threw up Jonah on to the dry land.

A second time the word of Yahweh came to Jonah.

“Get up,” said Yahweh, “and go to the great city of Nineveh and denounce it as I shall bid you speak.”

Then Jonah got up and went to Nineveh as Yahweh had bidden him. Now Nineveh was a huge city, great even in the sight of God. To walk through it took three days. Jonah went for a day’s journey into the city and then he began to prophesy.

“Three days<sup>2</sup> more,” he said, “and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

At once the Ninevites believed the word of God. They all put on sackcloth from the highest to the lowest, and when the tidings reached the King of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, and doffing his royal robes, he, too, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. Then he sent heralds to make this proclamation throughout Nineveh :

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<sup>1</sup> These concluding verses do not form part of the original psalm, but are probably the pious comment of some copyist.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX, but MT has “forty.”

“ BY ORDER OF THE KING AND HIS NOBLES !

“ Take Notice ! A Fast is proclaimed for Man and Beast, Sheep and Oxen ! None may eat or drink, but all shall put on Sackcloth and pray to God with all their Might. Further, every Man is to refrain from Lawlessness and any Act of Violence.”

For, said the king, “ Who knows whether God may not relent and His fierce anger be appeased so that we escape destruction ? ”

And indeed, when God saw what they were doing and how they were abandoning their wicked ways, He relented of the evil that He had said He would do to them and He stayed His hand.

But Jonah was bitterly angry and he prayed to Yahweh :

“ See now, O Yahweh, was not this just what I said would happen while I was still at home ? That was why I was so eager to fly to Tarshish. For I knew Thee, that Thou wert a God full of grace and pity, slow to be moved to anger, but abounding in mercy and swift to relent of evil. Now, therefore, Yahweh, I implore Thee, take away my life. I were better dead than alive.”

“ Are you doing right to be angry ? ” asked Yahweh.

But Jonah left the city and sat down to the east of it to see what was going to be the city's fate.<sup>1</sup> Then Yahweh<sup>2</sup> sent a gourd-vine to grow up as a shelter over Jonah's head and to relieve him in his distress. The vine gave great pleasure to Jonah, but at dawn the next day Yahweh sent a worm which attacked the vine and it withered away. Moreover, when the sun was up, Yahweh sent a scorching east wind and the sun beat down on Jonah's head, until he began to grow faint. He wished he were dead, saying to himself :

“ I were better dead than alive.”

Then Yahweh said to Jonah once again : “ Are you doing right to be angry ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Jonah, “ mortally angry.”

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<sup>1</sup> Omit v. 6, “ There he made himself a hut and sat down under it in the shade,” a gloss that destroys the significance of the vine.

<sup>2</sup> MT has “ Yahweh God ” and in vv. 7, 8, 9 “ God ” instead of Yahweh.

Bt Yahweh said : “ You had pity on the vine, although you never toiled over it, nor made it grow. It came up in a night and in a night it was dead. Then should not I have pity on the mighty city of Nineveh, in which are more than six score thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle too ? ”





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Edited by G. Currie Martin, M.A., B.D., and T. H. Robinson, M.A., D.D.  
NUMBER FIVE.

# THE BOOKS OF JOEL, NAHUM, AND OBADIAH

TRANSLATED INTO COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH BY  
J. GARROW DUNCAN, B.D., F.S.A. (Scot.)  
G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D.  
CONSTANCE M. COLTMAN, M.A., B.D.

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## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE modern translations that exist of parts or of the whole of the Old Testament are, as a rule, too expensive and too scholarly for the ordinary reader. In the case of the New Testament excellent help has been afforded by many recent translators, notably by Dr. Moffatt. In a wide experience among working men and women we have found frequent requests for a simple version of the Old Testament in similar language to that employed in the modern versions of the New Testament. By the generous help of our colleagues we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship.

Literary elegance has been sacrificed to clearness of expression and simplicity of language. In the present issue the three prophets, translated by different hands, vary greatly in style in the original, and this has been, to some extent, preserved in the versions here given. The three books have certain literary connections with one another, which render it convenient to have them in one volume.

We can now definitely promise a continuance of this series, and further issues will follow shortly. We are grateful for the reception given to those already issued, and have tried to benefit by many helpful criticisms received, for which we are thankful.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed by us.

G.C.M.  
T.H.R.

NOTE.—Throughout the footnotes LXX denotes the Septuagint, i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made from a Hebrew text between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era; and MT the Massoretic Text, i.e., the traditional Hebrew text.

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# THE BOOK OF JOEL

## INTRODUCTION.

SOMEWHERE about the year 400 B.C., or fifty years after the time of Ezra, a Jewish writer imbued with the enthusiasm of Ezra for the cult of Yahweh, discovered a collection of oracles or discourses which were understood to have been written by an earlier prophet named Joel.

From the parts of the book assignable to him (ch. i.-ii. 27) Joel appears to have lived probably some centuries earlier, though of this we cannot be certain, and all memory of the man seems to have perished. Only his words remained.

The pious Jew, who rediscovered them, found that by some slight additions, omissions and alterations, the book might be adapted to suit the needs of the end of the fifth century B.C., and used to propagate among the dejected people, who had just returned from exile in Babylonia, the teaching of the great Day of Yahweh with its promise of the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem to their former glory and place among the nations.

The book, which was originally a vivid and accurate description of a dreadful series of locust invasions accompanied by long-continued drought, a day of visitation from an angry Yahweh, has therefore been converted, by the addition of the passages ii. 28-iii., and other changes, into a description of the great Day of the Judgment of the Nations predicted in Ezekiel xxxviii.-xxxix.

## THE CONDITIONS OF THE PERIOD.

### *I.—SOCIAL.*

Our uncertainty as to the exact date at which Joel himself wrote robs us of all assistance from external evidence regarding the conditions of his period. We are therefore thrown back on the book itself.

1. From the disasters suffered and the blessings promised we gather that grain and fruit growing was the staple industry,

and that the people laboured under several great disadvantages. The first of these was, as it still is, the insufficient supply of water.<sup>1</sup> The second was the consequent prolonged droughts ; and the third the frequent occurrence of fires by which both pasture and trees were destroyed. These same causes made the land a real prey to locusts, and the position of the country as the battlefield of Eastern against Western nations made it liable to devastation and pillage at any time. The prominence given to the wild beasts of the veldt suggests also that owing to recent devastation the land had been allowed to run waste, and become the prey of these "beasts of the field."

The people lived, therefore, in a state of ceaseless expectation of disaster, as is clearly reflected in both parts of the book. How keenly alive to this they were, and how quickly they awakened to its seriousness, is shown in ii. 6 and i. 12. The picture is true of any period of Israel's history, though it would be an advantage to know what period is referred to. The water problem was prominent in Joel's mind, for he reminds them, in the song of thanksgiving, that Yahweh has sent the former and the latter rains as aforetime. But the Editor goes much further, and promises a permanent solution of the difficulty (iii. 18) ; which shows that it was being more keenly felt with the lapse of time.

What the book therefore describes is a hand-to-mouth existence among the rural population. Famines were the rule, and not the exception. At the most they could store up for such emergency only the surplus crop of each year, and the insufficiency of that is clearly shown in i. 17. The "store-houses" mentioned there do not refer to extensive public buildings, such as the granaries we find in Egypt, but to what might more properly be called private cupboards made of mud, such as the Arabs have used all along and use still in their houses in Egypt.

The one thing needed for the peace of a people dwelling in such insecurity was some guarantee of assured results for their labours. Both parts of the book, therefore, promise the very things needed—abundance of water, sure crops of corn and fruit, security against locust invasions, and permanent freedom

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<sup>1</sup> Hence the severity of the punishment in ii. 20.

from the devastation wrought by enemies. Compare ii. 19 with iii. 17-20, where this security is more definitely assured.

2. Regarding social organisation, the book gives little information. *No king* is mentioned. This is most likely due to the Editor, who wrote at a date when there was no king. *The Priests* are the only officials named. They are the most prominent class in the book, which again agrees with the late date at which the Editor re-wrote the book.

In i. 14 some say *the Elders* are appealed to as a class to collect the people, but in ii. 16 they are mentioned as having been themselves gathered together with the rest of the people. The word "Elders" does not describe a class of officials in Joel's part of the book, but means simply "men of age and experience," and such authority as they possess rests on these two qualifications. In the Editor's time, however, "Elders" were a separate class of officials; and he is probably responsible for the change of text in i. 14, which makes Joel address the Elders and bid them collect all the people.

*The Prophet* holds the usual position. He is a man specially gifted and inspired by God with a special message for his day, though in some ways Joel is unique. i. 2 also shows that the people were in the habit of assembling to hear the prophet's message.

The only other class mentioned are *the slaves*, male and female (ii. 29). As a class these existed all through Israel's history, but their position was more as children of the family, not as we understand slavery. There is no occasion to refer to the merchant or trading class, who inhabited the towns and villages as the Prophet deals with an agricultural problem.

## II.—RELIGIOUS.

Joel mentions no particular sin of the period, though it is clear there is some defection from Yahweh in his mind and theirs, which he deems it unnecessary to mention, or which the Editor has omitted.

The verse ii. 12 shows that the people have been giving too prominent a place to the externals of religion. "They have been forgetting the nearness of Yahweh and His power to strike." There was no living Faith in Him.



Yet it needed little to recall them to a fitting attitude. They accept Joel's suggestions and admit the justice of his call to repentance, and they rejoice in the thought of being Yahweh's peculiar people (ii. 17). Their penitence is immediate and complete. The idea that suffering may be sent by Yahweh for His own purpose, and may ultimately become a blessing through the restoration of proper relations between Him and them, is quite familiar to the people. That Yahweh should repent of the affliction which He has sent is a new attribute to Him.

The only public sin or moral backsliding Joel mentions is drunkenness (see i. 5-8).

### III.—POLITICAL.

There is no reference to any pressing problem of foreign politics. Joel is entirely concerned with the domestic problem and disaster described.

How the whole picture will fit in with the Editor's period, about 400 B.C., when Nehemiah is busy restoring the walls and Temple of Jerusalem and re-establishing the religion of Yahweh, may be seen by a reference to a detailed history of Israel for that time, or to the article by Dr. A. C. Welch in *The Expositor* for September, 1920.

### THE POET JOEL.

The name Joel occurs in fourteen different connections in the Old Testament, and in each instance describes a man of power and position. It is supposed to mean "Yahweh is God," which exactly describes the essence of the book's message. The Hebrew and Greek texts describe him as the son of Pethuel, and the son of Bathuel. Other versions describe him as Joel of Bethuel, a town identified with Beth-Zur in the Negeb. He appears to have belonged to Judah, and Judah and Jerusalem seem to have been the sphere where he laboured, though some passages seem to show an intimate knowledge of Northern Israel as well.

Some have suggested that he was, like Jeremiah, a Priest, which is very probable, if indeed he was not High Priest

(see i. 13)<sup>1</sup>. That he was a man of property is clear from i. 7, 16.

That he was a man of position and influence cannot be disputed. He relies on his influence with the people, and uses diplomacy, both in what he says and how he says it. He speaks with the suasive power of one who is accustomed to be heard with respect and obeyed. He uses no harsh words. He makes no accusations. He says nothing that will arouse opposition, or hinder the purpose which he has in view. The prophet usually speaks with the voice of denunciation, with the feeling all too evident that he will meet with no sympathy, and that he is the champion of a forlorn hope. There is nothing of this in Joel.

Even as priest or prophet he is manifestly an unusual type. Advanced in his thinking, he was gifted with a breadth of mind and endowed with spiritual insight not usually found among the Priests. It seems quite probable that Joel not only was a Priest, but also desired greatly to see reform in the Priesthood, as well as among the people: but reasons for this statement cannot be given here.

Perhaps the best description of him is that he was a Poet-Preacher. His one great aim and desire is to see Yahweh re-established in the hearts of his people, and "dwelling in Zion," unless this latter idea belongs only to the Editor.

He has been contrasted in many ways with other prophets—for instance, because he does not mention any great sin of the day: because there is no rebuke for sin in the book: and because Prayer, Fasting, and Temple Ritual seem very important in his eyes. That he mentions no special sin and adds no rebuke is perhaps an indication of his delicacy and his diplomatic method, and the passages (i. 9, 14; ii. 16) which lay stress on the Temple Ritual, are probably all inserted by the Editor. To accuse Joel of ceremonialism is to misunderstand utterly the spirit of what he wrote. He is accused of laying too great emphasis on the importance of a solemn Fast, but it is quite plain that what he values is the spirit that prompts it (cf. Dr. Welch, *Expositor*, 1920), as ii. 12 shows.

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<sup>1</sup> In i. 13 Joel invites the Priests to "come into the Temple," a rendering which LXX favours.

He has been called the Prophet of Pentecost, as prophesying a universal outpouring of the Spirit upon all mankind. ii. 28-32, however (even if written originally by him), prophesies an outpouring of the Spirit universal only in the case of the Jews, and only partial in the knowledge which it brings. It is noteworthy that in Yahweh's promise of restoration and blessing Joel does not rise to Job's conception of a state of spiritual bliss independent of material considerations.

Bewer has said: "Joel was no great thinker, and no great Prophet, but he was a Poet, and a Poet of no mean order." This is fair criticism. Joel appears not to have interested himself in the great political problems of his day, but to have focussed his attention on domestic affairs, the material and spiritual condition of the people, which latter was perhaps, after all, the greatest problem of his time, as it is of all time. His book, too, is poetry through and through.

He has a great command of language, and his style is "clear, fluent, beautiful." His writing will bear comparison with some of the finest in the Old Testament, and his terse, graphic, and dramatic style is peculiarly effective. His fondness for play upon words, and perhaps upon ideas as well, is quite a feature of the book.

It is no wonder that people listened to him and obeyed. He so aptly expressed their own feelings, and so carefully avoided jarring them. He never denounces. That is the chief point of contrast between him and other prophets. He is conciliatory. He seeks to persuade. He would have been a "Popular Preacher."

## THE EDITOR.

As in the case of Joel, our knowledge of the Editor is gleaned only from the book. As a writer he is vastly inferior to Joel in style and originality. He quotes copiously, and is probably responsible for every one of these passages in Part I. of the book on the ground of which Joel himself has been accused of borrowing. He quotes from Amos, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Nahum, Isaiah ii., Isaiah i., Malachi, Zephaniah, and he knew also Micah. He knew Old Testament Scripture well.

He was not an inspired prophet, and apparently his own name and position were not sufficient to command the interest of his

hearers. How deeply he was impressed by, and indebted to, Ezekiel has already been pointed out. That he was the borrower is proved by ii. 32, where he admits he is quoting (Obadiah 17). This settles the question in most of the other quotations.

Like Joel himself, he has not reached Job's conception of spiritual prosperity apart from material blessings, but makes Yahweh promise both. In fact he makes Yahweh renew His original promise of a "land flowing with milk and honey."

The two passages regarded as closely resembling Joel's style (ii. 28-31, and iii. 9-13) suggest that he is quoting a later composition of Joel's on Eschatology (*cf.* Bewer). It seems most probable that Joel's writings were in his hands in a fragmentary condition, unless we suppose that he ruthlessly cut out what he wanted and threw aside the rest.

He is regarded as responsible for chapters ii. 28-iii. and the following passages interpolated in the first part of the book: i. 9a; 13b; 15; ii. 1b; 2a; 11b; and 14 last clause; and ii. 20.

Opinions differ as to how he wished the first portion of the book to be understood when he revised it. Either he regarded the serious agricultural disaster as a sign of the nearness of the Great Day of Yahweh; or he wished us to interpret the Locust Invasions allegorically, as representing the gathering of the nations against Judah and Jerusalem, which would end in their Judgment and overthrow by Yahweh on that great and terrible day.

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# JOEL.

## PART I.

i. 1. The word of Yahweh which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.

ii. 1-10. *The Invasion of the Army of Locusts.*<sup>1</sup>

(a) ii. 1-3. *The Warning of its coming.*

Sound the signal with the horn in Zion, raise the alarm in my holy hill ! Let all the inhabitants be roused to fear ! For [the day of Yahweh is come, yea it is at hand, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds, yea of heavy clouds.]<sup>2</sup> Spread above the hills like twilight is a host numberless and powerful, whose like has never been from time immemorial, nor shall be after them unto the years of countless generations. The drought has devoured before them, but after them it is as if flame has scorched everything. Like the garden of Eden is the land in front of them, but behind them a wilderness of desolation, for nothing shall escape them.

(b) ii. 4-10. *describe the advance and appearance of this host.*

Their appearance is as the appearance of horses, and as saddle-horses so do they run. With a sound like the noise of chariots they leap on the tops of the hills, like the crackle of flame of fire devouring reeds, like a powerful army in full panoply of war ! From their presence hearts<sup>3</sup> quail in anguish, all faces withdraw their ruddy glow. Like men of valour they run, as men of war they attack.<sup>4</sup> They advance straight, each in his own track ; they do not entangle their paths. Nor do they press each his neighbour from behind. To a man they tread each his own highway, as if made for himself alone, and through every

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<sup>1</sup> The original order of the text is here restored.

<sup>2</sup> The passage is an interpolation by the Editor.

<sup>3</sup> MT has "peoples."

<sup>4</sup> MT adds, "The wall."

obstruction that opposes them they drop to the ground without a break in their ranks. They rush upon the city, they run upon the wall, they leap upon the houses, in by the windows they come like thieves.<sup>1</sup> In their presence earth seems to tremble, and the heavens to shiver. The sun and the moon grow dark and the stars withdraw their shining.

i. 2-12. *The Poet describes the ravages of the great plague of locusts accompanied by drought, to the assembled people.*

(a) i. 2-4. *Its character and extent.*

*A visitation of locusts was no unusual thing in Palestine. It is the fact that on this occasion there were four successive swarms, which makes it so memorable and unprecedented. An ordinary visitation of locusts would not be regarded as an occasion for a solemn call to national repentance, but as an item in the ordinary experience of the people.*

Hear this ye men who are old in experience, and give ear all ye inhabitants of the land! Has ever such a thing happened in your time, or even in the days of your fathers? Here is a thing to talk of to your children, and your children to their children, and they again to the generation after them. What the first swarm of locusts left cut and broken, the clouds of the second attack have obliterated. What these left, the third swarm has lapped up, and what the lappers left the succeeding swarm has devoured.

(b) i. 5-8. *The distress caused to the drinkers of wine.*

Rouse yourselves, you that drink to excess! Weep and howl, all you that drink wine, for this year's juice of the grape that is snatched from your lips! For a nation has come up against my land, powerful and numberless. His teeth are the tearing teeth of a lion, and the crunching molars of a young lion are his. He has made my vineyard a wilderness, and my fig-tree a mass of splinters. He has stripped it completely. He has cast it down. Its branches lie white. Weep, O Israel, as the virgin bride clothed in mourning garb weeps for him who was to have been the husband of her youth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX. MT has "thief."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX.



(c) i. 9. *Distress of the Priests, caused by the cessation of the sacrifices and their own consequent loss.*

[The meal-offering and the drink-offering are cut off from the house of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>] The Priests who minister at the altar of Yahweh walk with downcast look of sadness.

(d) i. 10-12. *Distress of the land, and the workers on the land. The whole countryside is personified and described as mourning like the people. In the next three verses there is a play on two Hebrew words meaning "to be withered" and "to be ashamed."*

Sore oppressed is the countryside, the earth droops in sorrow; for the corn-crop is destroyed, the juice in the grapes that should later have flown into the vats is dried up in the withered twigs, and this year's oil-flow has faded away. The farmers have no heart left; their spirit is worn down by fruitless labour. The harvesters<sup>2</sup> make loud lament for the wheat and barley crops, for perished is the harvest of the countryside. The vineyard is withered, the fig-tree languishes, the pomegranate, the palm-tree, the apple-tree, all the trees of the field wither in shame. Joy, too, is withered and shamed from the hearts of men.

The voice of Yahweh is in this visitation.

ii. 11. *The last clause to verse 11 has been added by the Editor, though some think that the whole verse, as well as verse 10, is an interpolation by him for his own purpose.*

And Yahweh has sent forth his voice in the noise of this, his approaching army, for exceeding great is his host, yea, powerful is his instrument that performs his command.

[For great is the day of Yahweh, and greatly to be feared. Who shall endure it ?]<sup>3</sup>

ii. 12-14. *Yahweh's message in this visitation.*

*The prophet thinks the scourge may be abated, or the evil may be yet averted, and fellowship with Yahweh re-established by prayer and penitence.*

And now hear the message of Yahweh: "Return unto me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and

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<sup>1</sup> Some regard 9a as interpolated by the Editor.

<sup>2</sup> MT has "vinedressers"—change of one letter gives "harvesters," which was probably the original text.

<sup>3</sup> This clause is an interpolation by the Editor.

wailing," but rend your hearts and not your garments, and return unto Yahweh, your God, for pitiful is he, and compassionate, slow of anger and abounding in love, and he is grieving over the suffering which he has allowed to come upon you. Who knows? He may return to us, he may relent, and cause this visitation to leave a blessing behind it [—cause to be left sacrifices of food and drink to Yahweh your God.]<sup>1</sup>

i. 13-14. *Call for a Penitential Assembly.*

*The prophet therefore calls for an assembly of the people, as was the custom in any sudden great emergency (cf. 2 Chr. xx. 3), accompanied by a fast. Confession, penitence, and supplication were the usual features of a fast. In Ezra viii. 21, fasting is described as "afflicting the soul."*

*Only on very serious occasions was sack-cloth worn day and night.*

Gird yourselves, O Priests, with sack-cloth. Make loud lament, you ministers who wait on the altar! Beat your breasts in grief! Come into the temple, pass the nights in sack-cloth, you servants of my God [for that sacrifices both of food and of drink are withheld from the house of your God.]<sup>1</sup> Proclaim a holy fast, summon an assembly of the people. Bring together the men of age and experience,<sup>2</sup> all the inhabitants of the land to the house of Yahweh, your God, and cry unto Yahweh.

i. 15. *There follows one of the several passages concerning the Day of Yahweh interpolated by a later editor, who converted Joel's discourses into an eschatological treatise. Instead of the locust invasion he has substituted the Day of Yahweh as the great catastrophe to be averted. This passage is supposed to be quoted from Is. xiii. 6, though some think it is an interpolation there too. Compare Joel ii. 2, ii. 11b.*

Alas for the day! For the day of Yahweh is at hand, and with manifestation of might from the Lord of Might will it come.

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<sup>1</sup> This clause is an interpolation by the Editor.

<sup>2</sup> MT has "O Elders"—text probably changed by the Editor.

- i. 16-20. *Facts which justify the call for prayer.*  
- *The food of man and beast is destroyed. The very beasts are crying unto Yahweh, and will not man?*

*The passage shows that in Palestine, as in Egypt, the custom of storing grain in storehouses for emergency prevailed. We get no definite information in the Old Testament, but here it is clear that they were built of sun-baked bricks, falling easily into disrepair during the rains. Mud was used in making sun-baked bricks in Palestine in Amorite times, especially for thick walls. Throughout the Jewish period also houses were mainly of these, with stone facings, and white-washed. After the departure of the locusts, fresh seed had been sown, which lay dormant owing to drought.*

Is not food cut off from before our very eyes, joy and rejoicing from the house of our God? The seeds sown, on which we relied for the autumn food, lie dormant under the clods.<sup>1</sup> Our stores of food saved from last year are exhausted, and our store-house chambers are broken down. It is useless repairing them, for, since the corn is withered, what shall we put in them?<sup>2</sup> The beasts of burden sigh<sup>3</sup> and the herds of oxen wander distraught, because there is no pasture for them. Even the flocks of sheep and goats are suffering for sin. Unto thee, O Yahweh, is their cry,<sup>4</sup> for fire has devoured the natural pasture of the veldt, and flame has scorched all the trees of the countryside. Even the wild beasts cry aloud unto thee, for dried up are the streams and fire has devoured the pasture of the veldt, their resting-place by night.

- ii. 15-17.<sup>5</sup> *The Solemn Assembly and Prayer.*

*With this passage compare I Macc. vii. 36, and Judith iv. 9-15. The helpless babes and aged will move Yahweh to pity.*

They have blown the trumpet in Zion. They have made a solemn fast. They have summoned an assembly

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<sup>1</sup> MT unintelligible. Steiner's emendation "clods" adopted.

<sup>2</sup> LXX here restores correct text.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew words for "Why do the beasts sigh?" and "What shall we put in them?" are so alike that a scribe omitted part of each clause. It is here restored.

<sup>4</sup> MT and LXX read "do I cry."

<sup>5</sup> MT and LXX have imperatives throughout this passage.

and gathered together the people. They have sanctified the congregation. They have collected the old men. They have brought in the children, even those that suck the breasts. The bridegroom has come forth from his chamber, and the bride from her marriage-closet. Between the porch of the temple and the altar the priests, the ministers of Yahweh, walk weeping and crying: "Have mercy, O Yahweh, upon thy people, and give not thy possession to be a thing despised and a byword among the peoples round about. Why should they say among the nations 'Where is their God?' "

ii. 18-20, 25, 26ac, 27. *Yahweh's Answer and Promise of Restoration.*

*The verses in the following two passages are restored to their original order.*

And Yahweh had compassion on his land and showed mercy unto his people. And Yahweh answered and said to his people: "Behold I am sending<sup>1</sup> you corn and grape-juice, and olive oil for this year, and you will have abundance of each, and I will not give you to be the sport of the nations (i.e., the political battlefield for the peoples round about). [The enemy from the north]<sup>2</sup> I will remove far away from you, and I will drive him to a land of drought and desolation, his fore-part towards the Dead Sea and his hinder part towards the Mediterranean; and the smell of the carcasses will arise, and their stench will ascend, for he has wrought great destruction. And I will restore to you the fruits<sup>3</sup> which the locusts have eaten, the swarmer, the lapper, the devourer, and the shearer, my great army which I sent among you. And you will eat to the full and be satisfied, and my people will never again be put to shame. And you will know that in the midst of Israel am I, and I am Yahweh, and there is none besides."

And my people will never again be put to shame.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2</sup> This term seems to be due to the Editor. Joel probably wrote some other phrase.

<sup>3</sup> Some translate by "years."

<sup>4</sup> This clause and probably the whole of the last verse, is a gloss or marginal note accidentally included.

ii. 21-24, 26b.<sup>1</sup> *Song of Joy over Restoration begun.*

-- *This passage was written some months at least after the preceding. The effects of the devastation have disappeared, and the poet now calls upon the land, the beasts, and the people to rejoice over the revived fertility.*

Fear not, O earth, but rejoice and be glad, for Yahweh has acted with power. Fear not, O wild beasts, for the pastures of the veldt are growing green, the tree is sending up its fruit, the fig-tree and the vine are yielding their strength.

And you, children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in Yahweh, your God, who has sent you an instructor for righteousness, and has now caused to fall upon you the autumn rains and the spring rains as of old. See! the threshing-floors are full of wheat, and the vats overflow with the juice of the grape and the olive-berry! And you will praise the name of Yahweh, your God, for what he has done among you in setting you apart for himself.<sup>1</sup>

## PART II.

ii. 28-iii. *Judah's Ideal Future inaugurated by the Advent of the great Day of Yahweh.*

(a) ii. 28-32. *An oracle declaring the coming of the Great Day of Yahweh with the remarkable signs that will herald it and its result for Israel. The passage gives two signs:*

(1) *There will be a great outpouring of the Spirit. Ecstatic experiences will be universal among Yahweh's people of every class and station.*

(2) *There will be great disturbances in the earth and heavens. There will be dreadful wars, and destruction of property, towns, and people, "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke ascending." The sun will be eclipsed, and the moon will look the colour of blood, seen through the smoke of burning*

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<sup>1</sup> It is quite likely that, after the locusts departed, the farmers sowed fresh seed, which, owing to the drought, lay dormant (i. 17) for long, but ultimately yielded a harvest, for which Joel gives thanks. It is more difficult to explain how the fruit-trees could yield fruit that same year after their treatment; but it is noticeable that the word used in LXX in i. 10, 12, means "This year's flow of oil is lessened" and v. 12, "The fig-trees are made few," implying not a total annihilation. The verses have been restored to what seems to have been their original order.

*villages or the dust of ruined houses. Only those Jews who habitually pray to, and serve, Yahweh, will be saved.*

And after this I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will speak under divine impulse, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men of purity will see visions, and even upon slaves, both male and female, will I pour out my spirit in those days. And I will send portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon to the colour of blood, before the advent of the Day of Yahweh, the great and terrible one. And it shall be that every one who calls habitually on the name of Yahweh will be delivered, "for in the hill of Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those that escape," as Yahweh has said,<sup>1</sup> and among the saved will be those whom Yahweh calls (the elect of Yahweh).

(b) iii. 1-3. *The third sign that the Day of Yahweh has arrived is the gathering of all the nations to the valley where Yahweh judges. They will come up to plunder Jerusalem, but Yahweh will meet them there and hold a reckoning with them for the wrongs which they have done to his people. The background of this part of the book is Ezekiel xxxviii.-xxxix. which should be compared.*

*The valley of Jehoshaphat is really a rhetorical device, and means "the valley where Yahweh judges," or it is a late insertion. At the time when the book was written there was no valley so named near Jerusalem, though the Kidron valley received the name from this passage at a very early date. If we take the word literally, the valley referred to in the text must be very near to Jerusalem, and is generally identified with the Kidron valley. Zechariah (chap. xiv.) gives it and the basin formed by it with the junction of the three adjoining valleys on the South side as the Valley of Reckoning.*

*Old Testament tradition says all heathen nations are included, but the atrocities of which they are accused limit the word "nations" to those guilty. These atrocities are detailed in the following passage.*

And behold, in those days and at the time when I will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather

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<sup>1</sup> Obadiah 17.



together all the nations and I will bring them down to the valley where Yahweh judges, and I will reckon with them there concerning my people and my possession Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations. For they have divided my land amongst themselves and they have cast lots over my people. They have given boys as the price for harlots, and they have sold girls for wine and drunk it.

(c) iii. 4-8. *Here follows a special oracle denouncing the atrocities of the Phœnicians (Sidon and Tyre) and the Philistines. These have not actually plundered the land of Judah in war, but their traders have followed in the wake of victorious armies, buying the booty, and their captives as slaves. The silver and gold of the Jewish homes (or as some say, of the Temple) they have carried away to adorn their own palaces (or Temples). The Jewish maidens and boys they have sold to Greek merchants to carry them far away from their homes. This is a special abomination in the sight of Yahweh; and as they have sowed, so will they reap. They will receive the same treatment in accordance with the law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Their children will be sold to the men of Sheba, the Sabæans, and will be carried as far South as the Jewish captives have been carried North. The Sabæans and Greeks were middlemen in the slave traffic. Both traded in Palestine from an early date—the Greeks as early as 650 B.C., as proved by their tombs at Gezer.*

*It was quite usual for traders to follow a victorious army, and supply wine, goods and women to the soldiers in exchange for booty and captives. Their motive was purely commercial, though a deeper and more cruel motive is suggested here. The passage is supposed by some to be later insertion, though it cannot date later than 350 B.C.*

Moreover, what are you to me, Tyre and Sidon, and all you districts of Philistia? Are you securing repayment from me for something I have done? Or are you doing something against me to provoke me to repay it? If so, then swiftly and speedily will I bring your deed upon your own head. You who have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried away my goodly treasures to your temples,<sup>1</sup> and have sold the sons of

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX.



Judah and the sons of Jerusalem to the Greeks, that they might remove them as far as possible from their homes. Behold, I am just about to rouse them from the place to which you have sold them, and I will make your deed recoil upon your own head. For I will sell your sons and daughters to the Jews, and they will sell them to the Sabæans, who will in turn sell them to a nation further away, for Yahweh has spoken.

(d) iii. 9-12. *Yahweh demands that a herald be sent, or commands his angelic host to bid the nations prepare for this final reckoning with him. In the first three verses he uses the simile of battle. It is to be a conflict with dreadful consequences. They must therefore make all possible preparations, both spiritual and material. They must begin with a solemn service of consecration. Every weapon of every kind, and every soldier available will be needed.*

*Then in the last verse the figure suddenly changes to the Law Court. "The battle-scene gives place to the Judgment-scene" (Bewer), and Yahweh sits, not in wrath, but in solemn majesty to reckon with all the nations around, or, as some prefer, with all the nations "from everywhere." For the change of simile compare Ps. xxiii.*

*The crisp, clear, short sentences of the original Hebrew suggest that this passage was written by Joel himself, or is a good imitation. Compare ii. 28-32 for the style.*

Proclaim this among the nations: "Inaugurate war with holy rites! Rouse the mighty men of valour. Let all the men of war come together and go forth to fight! Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, A man of might am I! Let the coward<sup>1</sup> become a hero!" Let the nations be roused and go forth to the valley where Yahweh judges, for there will I sit to reckon with all the peoples round about.

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<sup>1</sup> MT (v. 11) reads "Make haste and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together at that place"—a gloss upon 12a and usually omitted. In 11b MT reads "Cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Yahweh!" for which LXX has "Let the meek become a warrior," thus restoring the right text.

(e) iii. 13. *There is an interval in the dramatic movement here, during which the nations are understood to have assembled themselves at Jerusalem in the valley where Yahweh judges.*

*The writer now compares the assembled peoples to a grape-harvest ready for the vintage-knife, and the valley to a winepress full of grapes ready for the juice to be trodden out. So ripe are they that the vats are full to overflowing before anyone has trodden the winepress.*

*When he sees them gathered together, Yahweh turns to his angelic host, the instruments who are to work out his judgment (not to the Jews), bids them reap the harvest, and then tread out the grapes which they have cut off and thrown into the press.*

*The passage practically means that they are to tread upon the nations who are packed in the valley like grapes in a winepress, and wade in their blood, with which compare Isaiah lxiii. 3.*

*It is possible that it is the elect remnant of Judah (ii. 32) that Yahweh here calls on to act as his instruments of punishment.*

*The graphic style of the verse again suggests the hand of Joel himself.*

Make your vintage-knives flash, for the grape-harvest is ripe. Come, get down into the winepress and tread, for the winepress is full. Empty the vats, for their overflow is great.<sup>1</sup>

(f) iii. 14-17. *The writer now describes the conflict, or reckoning, between Yahweh and the nations. Yahweh does not appear in the actual battle, but his voice sounds from Zion above the din of conflict. The conflict itself, or treading, is not described, and its result is assumed, but the accompanying disturbances of nature, which make the conflict more gruesome, are detailed. The fate of Israel, however, is left in no doubt. Yahweh will be their refuge. The great, all-important outcome of the reckoning with, or crushing of, the nations, will be the restoration of Yahweh to his place in the hearts of Israel, and to his abode in Zion. The change of subject in verse 17 is characteristic of the writer.*

There is the rustling of crowds in the Valley of Reckoning, for the conflict of the day of Yahweh is raging in the

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<sup>1</sup> MT has "for great is their wickedness."

Valley of Decision. Sun and moon have turned black, and the stars have hidden their light. And Yahweh thunders from Zion, and from Jerusalem gives forth his voice, and the heavens and the earth do quake, but Yahweh is a refuge to his people and a fortress to the sons of Israel (i.e., Judah). And you will now know that I am Yahweh, your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy hill, and Jerusalem will be a sanctuary, and strangers will not gain pass through her.

(g) iii. 18-21. *The last passage has left us without any definite assurance as to Israel's fate in the future. The Editor now supplies this deficiency. An ideal time of blessing for Judah will follow this reckoning with the nations, and their discomfiture. Like the early description of Canaan in the Old Testament, Judah will be "a land flowing with milk and honey." The fertility of the country will be phenomenal. Barren hills will flow with milk and wine. The problem of the water supply of Jerusalem will also be solved for ever to some extent. A never-failing spring will flow out of the Temple hill (Zion), and water the Wady-es-Sant, flowing out to the Mediterranean by Gath and Askelon.*

*Egypt and Edom, great as they are, will be desolation in comparison, for Yahweh will avenge the innocent blood of Jews, which has been shed by Edom on Jewish soil.*

*The writer thus strikes two popular notes here. The problem of the water supply has always been of outstanding interest in Jerusalem, so that he touches a hope that was strong in every breast. A constant supply of good water would undoubtedly be part of the picture of an ideal age in the mind of any dweller in Jerusalem.*

*Though the complete destruction of Edom might not also form part of that picture, the prediction of his further punishment could not fail to awaken joy in the heart of every post-exilic Jew. The same may apply to Egypt also, though not to the same degree.*

*The foundation and essential background of this ideal age of prosperity is the abiding presence of Yahweh in Zion.*

*And in that day the mountains will drip sweetness<sup>1</sup> (i.e., honey), and the hills flow with milk, and all the*

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX. MT has "sweet wine."

\_water-courses of Judah will flow with water, and a spring will go out from the house of Yahweh and will fill the Vale of Acacias. [Egypt will become a desolation, and Edom a barren plain for his violence done to the sons of Judah, in that he did pour out the blood of the innocent in their own land.]<sup>1</sup> But Judah will be inherited for ever, and Jerusalem unto all generations. [And I will avenge their blood, which I have not avenged]<sup>1</sup>, for Yahweh will abide in Zion.

<sup>1</sup> If the bracketed passages are omitted, which so interrupt the sense and introduce ideas that would fit better an earlier section, the passage would flow much more smoothly. Egypt and Edom were already included among the nations, and so some propose to omit these clauses. But we have pointed out how especially the further punishment of Edom would appeal to the Jews.

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# THE BOOK OF NAHUM

## INTRODUCTION

**O**F the prophet Nahum we know nothing beyond the mention of his name in the title of his book. There is considerable evidence that he was a native of the Southern kingdom of Judah, in which his interest seems to have been most centred, but the identification of his birthplace is by no means certain.

As to the period covered by the greater section of his message, there is much greater assurance. The capture of the city of No-Ammon (Thebes) in Egypt by the armies of Assur-bani-pal took place in 664-662, and the city of Nineveh was captured by the Medes in 612 B.C. Somewhere during the half-century thus marked out must have been the period of his prophecy. Probably the first siege of Nineveh under Cyaxares, the Median king, was the occasion that gave rise to the prophet's terrible forecast of Nineveh's final overthrow. This took place about 624 B.C. There is a probability that the final siege of Nineveh, which appears to have lasted for about two years, may have been the actual event to which reference is made. As Professor Davidson said in his commentary on the book: "If the distress of Nineveh referred to were the final one (i. 9, 12,) the descriptions of the prophecy would acquire a reality and naturalness which they otherwise want, and the general characteristics of Hebrew prophecy would be more truly conserved."

The larger section of the book (chaps. ii. and iii.) consists of a picturesque and poetic description of the destruction of Nineveh, and the moral reason for its absolute overthrow. The splendour of the imagery and language can be felt even through the medium of a translation. The prophet voices the cry of the oppressed and suffering, and their natural feelings of relief and exultation, when they witness the destruction of the tyrant's power. The city is like a lair of wild beasts, and as the villagers rejoice when some mighty hunter destroys the lions that have ravaged their herds and slain their people, so do the oppressed exult at the victory over their enemies. The

city is like a Cleopatra, who has lured many to destruction, and her overthrow brings release from the miasma of moral corruption. Humanity breathes more freely when this menace to liberty, purity and peace has been removed. And the prophet feels that Yahweh is on his side, and that the defeat of Assyria is not only a triumph of human arms, but a Divine judgment.

The first chapter presents considerably greater difficulties. Its connection with the rest of the book is not very clear, for it is much more general in tone, and contains no special reference to the circumstances of the later section. Besides, there is evidence that it was originally an acrostic poem, each verse of which began with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is not now possible to restore this form, as the text has been much altered and possibly the order of the verses changed. We have to take it more or less as it stands, and confess our inability to reconstruct the original with any certainty. The poem is probably considerably later than Nahum's own prophecy, and may date from the middle of the fifth century or even later. The standpoint of the writer is that of the later prophets, who were looking for restoration, and for the mercy of Yahweh in His goodness to a repentant and recreated nation.

It has been frequently noted that Nahum has no reference to the sins of his own people—all his attention being concentrated on the corruption of Nineveh. The pent-up feelings of generations of suffering patriots here burst forth into flame. Yet he gains in power by this very fact, and, as Driver says, his "dignity and force approach most nearly to Isaiah." Nor can we hold that he has no modern message, for "Assyria in his hands becomes an object lesson to the empires of the modern world, teaching as an eternal principle of the divine government of the world, the absolute necessity for a nation's continued vitality, of that righteousness, personal, civic, material, which alone exalteth a nation" (A. R. S. Kennedy).

His point of view is in opposition to that of Jeremiah, and he may be regarded as our only literary representative of those who were considered "false prophets." He can see no future for the nation save in victory. Yahweh must triumph over his enemies, and his land and temple must never be profaned by the victorious feet of pagans. He represents the view of the average man—not that of the spiritual idealist—only that the

brilliance of his poetical power and the splendour of his descriptive language lift him into the realm of literature. The translator has attempted to be simple in language, and yet preserve the poetic form as well as possible. The Irish word "keen" seemed the only one to express the idea in ii. 7. It is much more expressive than "bewail" or "lament."



# NAHUM

*The first section is an acrostic poem, now imperfect, and probably added to Nahum's book at a much later period. It deals in general terms with Yahweh's power and judgments.*

i. 2-10.

- 2 A jealous God<sup>1</sup> is Yahweh,  
Vengeful is Yahweh and wrathful.
- 3b In storm and tempest is Yahweh's path,  
The clouds are the dust of his feet.
- 4 The sea he rebukes and dries up,  
He changes streams to dry channels.  
Bashan and Carmel languish,  
And the blossom of Lebanon fails.
- 5 The mountains tremble at his touch,  
The hills become molten.  
The earth heaves before him.  
The habitable world, and all that dwell in it.
- 6 Before his indignation who can stand ?  
Or who can bear the fierceness of his anger ?  
His fury pours out like fire.  
The rocks are rent at his presence.
- 7 Good is Yahweh to them that put their hope in him.  
He knows them that trust in him.
- 8 With an overflowing flood he will utterly destroy them  
that rise up against him,<sup>2</sup>  
And pursue his foes unto utter gloom.
- 9b He makes a total desolation ;  
Nor shall trouble rise a second time.
- 9a What think you of Yahweh ?
- 2b Yahweh is vengeful on his adversaries.  
He keeps his anger against his enemies.

*The following verse is probably a later addition, as it breaks the thought, and does not fit the acrostic scheme.*

- 3 [Slow to anger and great in might is Yahweh ;  
And will not let (transgressors) scot free.]

---

<sup>1</sup> MT adds "and vengeful."

<sup>2</sup> Following the LXX.

10 And though they are as thorns tangled and soaked,  
As dry stubble shall they be consumed.

*It is difficult to place this section, for the verses, as they stand in the ordinary text, destroy the sense of the passage but when thus connected give a message of comfort and re-assurance to Judah.*

i. 12, 13, 15 ; ii. 2.

12 Thus saith Yahweh :

Though they be strong and numerous

They shall be cut down ; they shall disappear.

Though I have afflicted you, I shall not afflict you any longer.

13 Now will I break his yoke from off you ;

Now will I burst your bonds.

15 Lo ! upon the mountains the feet of the messenger of good news, proclaiming peace !

Celebrate your feasts, O Judah ! pay your vows !

For the wrongdoer shall no more pass through you.

He is utterly destroyed.

ii. 2 For Yahweh restores the vine<sup>1</sup> of Jacob, even as the vine<sup>1</sup> of Israel,

Seeing that the ravagers had devastated and destroyed these vine-yards.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Oracle against Nineveh.*

i. 1. The Book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh.

*This constitutes Nahum's first real message, and consists of an arraignment of Nineveh, and a declaration of impending judgment on the city.*

i. 11, 14.

11 Out of you (i.e., Nineveh) came he forth, who imagined evil against Yahweh.

Who gave mischievous counsel.

14 Thus has Yahweh commanded concerning you :

Your name shall no longer be remembered.

From the house of your god will I remove idols and images,  
It shall become your tomb of dishonour.

---

<sup>1</sup> MT "glory," but slight change gives "vine."

<sup>2</sup> Literally "their twigs."

*Now follows the first main section of the prophecy, consisting of a vivid description of the onslaught on Nineveh, and of its destruction, compared to that of a lion's den. The closing verses contain an emphatic statement of the power of Yabweh's word.*

ii. 1, 3-13.

- 1 The hammerer has come up against you.  
Hold the fortress!  
Guard the way!  
Gird up your loins!  
Put forth all your might!
- 3 The shield of his soldiers is red in hue,  
The warriors are clad in scarlet.  
The metal (?) of the chariots gleam like fire!  
י . . י  
And the י . . י quiver.
- 4 In the fields the chariots flash past.  
They gallop across the plains.  
They appear as torches,  
They dart to and fro like lightning.
- 5 He remembers his valiant men,  
They stumble in their steps,  
They hasten to the wall,  
Their defence is made ready.
- 6 The river gates are opened,  
The palace falls in ruin.
- 7 And י . . י is uncovered and brought out,  
Her maids are keening like doves, and beating on their breasts.
- 8 Nineveh was ever a pool of water,  
And (her inhabitants) flee away.  
They cry "Stand!" but no one turns back.
- 9 Spoil the silver! Loot the gold!  
There is no end to the store  
And wealth of precious objects.
- 10 Lo! a wilderness, weariness and waste!  
The melting heart, and the trembling knees,  
Anguish in all loins,  
And blanching of all faces!

---

י...י In the present state of our knowledge the Hebrew words which occur here are unintelligible.

- 11 Where is the den of lions,  
The lair<sup>1</sup> of the young lions—  
Where the lions and her cubs were wont to be,  
And none to make them afraid ?
- 12 The lion, who tore up the meal for his young,  
Strangling the prey for his mate.  
He filled his dens with prey,  
And his lairs with torn beasts.
- 13 Lo ! I am against you, oracle of Yahweh of Hosts.  
I will send up your <sup>2</sup>. . .<sup>2</sup> in smoke.  
The sword will devour your young lions.  
I will cut off your prey from the land,  
The voice of your emissaries will be heard no more.

*Now follows the second main section of the prophecy. It contains a description of a renewed attack on the city, and the reason for its destruction. The comparison with the locust swarms should be read alongside those in Joel.*

iii. 1-19.

- 1 Woe to the city of blood,  
Full of falsehood and violence !  
It continually seeks after prey.
- 2 Hark the whip ! Harken the noise of rattling wheels !  
Hark the prancing horses, the bounding chariots !
- 3 The charging horsemen, the flashing sword, the glittering  
Lo, the multitude of the slain ! [spears !  
The heaps of the dead !  
The unnumbered masses of the slain !  
Men stumble over the corpses.
- 4 Such is the reward of the manifold wickedness of the  
The mistress of magic— [lovely temptress,  
The city that, through her harlotry, destroys nations,  
And peoples by her wicked arts.
- 5 Lo ! I am against you ! Oracle of Yahweh of Hosts.  
Your raiment will I throw over your face,  
Displaying your nakedness to the nations,  
And your shame to the kingdoms !

---

<sup>1</sup> By slight alteration of the Hebrew word.

<sup>2</sup>...<sup>2</sup> In the present state of our knowledge the Hebrew word which occurs here is unintelligible.

- 6 I will throw loathsome dirt upon you,  
 Disgracing you, and making you an object of derision.  
 7 So that all who look on you will flee from you, and cry,  
 "Nineveh is laid waste, who shall mourn for her?"  
 Where shall I seek comforters for her?  
 8 Are you better than No-Ammon,  
 Girt about by the streams of the Nile,  
 Whose ramparts was the great river, and her walls its  
 waters?<sup>1</sup>  
 9 Cush and Egypt were her unending strength,  
 Put and Lubim<sup>2</sup> her<sup>3</sup> helpers.  
 10 Yet were her people carried away and went into captivity,  
 Her children were dashed to pieces at the head of every  
 street.  
 They cast lots for her nobles, and her great men were bound  
 in chains.  
 11 You shall also become drunk, and shall swoon,  
 You shall also seek refuge from the enemy.  
 12 All your fortresses are like fig-trees—your garrisons like  
 their first ripe fruit.  
 When they are shaken they drop into the eater's mouth.  
 13 Lo! your people<sup>4</sup> become like women,  
 The gates of your land are thrown open to their foes.  
 The fire has destroyed the barriers of your gates.

*The following verses consist of an ironical encouragement to resist.*

- 14 Draw water for the siege, strengthen your fortifications  
 Go to the clay-pits, and tread the clay,  
 Seize hold of the moulds for the bricks.

*Now the prophet returns to the vision of judgment, and closes with a final dirge, mocking as a pæan.*

- 15 There the fire has destroyed you, and the sword has cut  
 you off.  
 It has devoured you, though you have increased like the  
 young locust swarm.

---

<sup>1</sup> By change of vowels we get "waters" instead of "sea."

<sup>2</sup> Probably countries bordering on Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> MT "thy."

<sup>4</sup> MT adds "in your midst."

- 16 Though you have multiplied your merchants more than  
the stars of heaven.  
And your nobles and high-officers like locust-swarms,  
17 Which swarm in the hedges on a cold day,  
But they fly away when the sun rises, and their place is  
unknown.  
18 Woe to you !<sup>1</sup> your shepherds slumber ! and your great  
ones fall asleep ;  
Your people are scattered on the mountains, and there is  
no one to gather them in.  
19 There is no healing for your hurt—your wound is deadly.  
All who hear the report of your downfall, clap their hands,  
For upon whom has not your evil continually fallen ?

---

<sup>1</sup> MT adds "O King of Assyria."

# THE BOOK OF OBADIAH.

## INTRODUCTION.

RACIAL hatred is one of the most persistent obstacles to human peace and progress, though rarely has it found a more vehement and vindictive utterance than in the short prophecy of Obadiah. Its roots run down to the dim beginnings of history, and it is continually fed by bitter and inflaming memories. The antipathies of modern nations are still kept alive by the recollections of defeats in bygone battles and even of tribal conflicts in the time of Julius Cæsar. In the same way, Obadiah's theme, the enmity between Israelite and Edomite—perhaps the most virulent example of national antagonism known to history—can be traced back to their traditional ancestors. The feud between Jacob and his twin brother Esau, “the Red,” in Hebrew “Edom,”<sup>1</sup> was inherited by their tribal descendants. The blood relationship, which they never forgot, and their common frontiers—for Edom bounded Judah on the south—only served to strengthen their mutual antipathies. From Amos onwards, expectation of Yahweh's doom upon Edom recurs like a minor chord through Hebrew prophecy, until it rises to a crashing climax in Obadiah's Hymn of Hate. Only one gleam of wider vision relieves the murky gloom of Obadiah's savage exultation over a chastened foe. His conception of a Kingdom that shall be Yahweh's was crude enough, hardly more than the triumph of Israel over her national foes,<sup>2</sup> yet it was destined to become the one solvent of racial hatred, the one antidote to national antagonism, when Jesus transformed it into his sublime ideal of a world-wide Kingdom of God, ruled by the King of Love, wherein all men were brothers indeed. Obadiah helped to sow the seed of belief in the sovereignty of God. He set it in the exceeding bitter soil of national rancour and revenge, but it germinated through the centuries until at last it flowered into the tree of life, whose fruit shall be for the healing of the nations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Read Gen. xxv. 23-34.

<sup>2</sup> See verse 21.



Obadiah means "Servant of God," too common a name to afford any clue to our author's identity. He wrote at a time when raids upon the Edomites, probably by Arabs, sons of the desert like themselves, seemed to him to promise fulfilment of an ancient oracle against Edom, also quoted by Jeremiah (chap. xlix.). If the book is a unity, it must have been written after 586 B.C., when the great capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians took place, and before 400 B.C., for about that date Joel quoted from the Book of Obadiah, but verses 15 to 21 are different in matter and manner from the earlier ones and may be from other and later hands.

Edom, the "Red Land," stretched between Palestine and the Arabian desert, a hundred miles by twenty of porphyry and red sandstone. The capital, Petra, lay fifty miles south of the Dead Sea, a mountain eyrie perched so inaccessibly among the porphyry cliffs and approached by such tortuous defiles, that in later times its very existence was forgotten for centuries. The town of Teman lay to the north of Petra.

The geographical allusions of the closing verses are very obscure and the text is corrupt. But the general tenour is clearly that to S. and W., to N. and E., the Jews were to regain their ideal boundaries. The northern exiles were to penetrate Phœnicia as far as Zarephath, the far northern town between Tyre and Sidon, where the widow once succoured Elijah; while the southern exiles were to gain the cities of the Negeb, the southernmost district of Palestine and the point of attack upon Edom. The text speaks of Judahites in exile at Sepharad, but the only known place of that name is in Asia Minor, where we should not expect to find exiled Jews. Either there was another Sepharad, now unidentified, or there may be some confusion in the text between Sepharad and the Zarephath just previously mentioned.

# OBADIAH

1a. The prophecy of Obadiah.

*Obadiah quotes an ancient oracle against Edom which is also quoted, a little differently, in Jeremiah xlix. 14-16 and 7-10.*

1b-5. This is the oracle of the Lord Yahweh against Edom.

This word from Yahweh came to us at the time when a messenger had been despatched to the nations with the challenge, "Rise, and fly to arms against her!"

Yahweh said :

"Behold, I will make you least among the nations and despised by men. Your pride goes before a fall. Because you live in a lofty home among the clefts of Petra, you say to yourself, 'Who can bring me to the ground?' But though you were to soar like the eagle and set your nest among the stars, even from there would I bring you down. When men come and cut your grapes they will leave no gleanings; when thieves of the night attack you they will take their fill of plunder."<sup>1</sup>

*A Dirge over Esau's doom. Esau the Red was the legendary ancestor of the Edomites, and here stands for the nation which was being betrayed by its neighbours. Its plight recalled the old oracle, that Esau, for all his cunning, should one day be caught napping.*

6-8. How thoroughly has Esau been ransacked and his hidden places rifled! All your allies have driven you back to your frontiers and your friends have deceived you. Those that had broken bread with you kept setting traps for your undoing and no one had sense enough to see through them.<sup>2</sup> Yahweh had prophesied it: "In that day shall I not destroy the wise men of Edom and the cunning of Mount Esau?"

---

<sup>1</sup> Following Jer. xlix. 9 and omitting "How art thou cut off" as a gloss.

<sup>2</sup> Very uncertain text.

*In the Babylonian invasion of 586 B.C. the Edomites had sided against Judah and gloated over the capture of Jerusalem. But now disaster is going to overwhelm them so that never again would they be able to repeat their former treachery.*

9-14 and 15b. Ah, Teman, such a panic shall strike your warriors that not a man upon Mount Esau will escape with his life. Overwhelmed with shame, you shall pay with the last drop of your blood for the injury done to your brother Jacob. When you stood aloof on the day that foreigners carried off his wealth and foes passed through his gates to cast lots for Jerusalem, on that fatal day you took the part of his enemies. But never again shall you gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune! Never again exult over the men of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor jeer at them in the day of their distress! Never again shall you enter my people's gates in their day of adversity, to gaze on their misery and lay hands upon their goods! Never again shall you stand at the cross-roads to cut off their fugitives and to betray the survivors in their day of defeat! As you served others, so shall you be served yourself. Your ill-deeds will come home to roost.<sup>1</sup>

*The Day of Yahweh is near, when all nations alike shall suffer judgment. Probably a later appendix.*

15a, 16. The Day of Yahweh is at hand for all nations. For as you have drunk upon my holy hill, so in their turn shall all the nations drink. Drunk with wine, they shall reel and be brought down to nothing.

*A comment on the preceding verses. A remnant of the Jews shall escape the Divine Judgment and be enabled to inflict complete vengeance upon Edom.*

17-18. But on Mount Zion a remnant shall take sanctuary, and the House of Jacob shall regain their possessions. For Yahweh has said that the House of Jacob shall be the fire and the House of Joseph shall be the flame, and the House of Esau shall be the stubble. They will set it alight and consume it until there is not a soul left alive of the House of Esau.

---

<sup>1</sup> Connecting ver. 15b with ver. 14.

- This closing passage, especially in its geographical terms, is very obscure. But the general tenour is that the exiled Jews shall return and regain their ideal boundaries and then proceed to a final reckoning with Mount Esau.

19-21. They shall gain the South Country from Mount Esau and the Lowlands from the Philistines. They shall get back the district of Ephraim from Samaria and Gilead from the hands of the Ammonites.<sup>1</sup> The exiled Israelites who are (in Halah<sup>2</sup> shall get) Phœnicia as far as Zarephath and the exiles of Jerusalem who are now in Sepharad shall have the cities<sup>3</sup> of the South. They shall go up as victors to Mount Zion to pass judgment on Mount Esau. And the Kingdom shall be Yahweh's.

---

<sup>1</sup> Instead of Benjamin, a very slight change in the Hebrew.

<sup>2</sup> Conjectural emendation of the unintelligible text.

<sup>3</sup> Possibly instead of "the cities" we should read the proper name "Arad," the well-known Canaanitish city of the Negeb, see Num. xxi. 1, which would form a better parallel to Zarephath. The words are almost identical in Hebrew and there were few other cities in the Negeb to explain the use of the collective.

1

2

3

4

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NUMBER SIX.

# THE BOOK OF HOSEA

TRANSLATED INTO COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH BY  
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## EDITORS' PREFACE.

THE modern translations that exist of parts or of the whole of the Old Testament are, as a rule, too expensive and too scholarly for the ordinary reader. In the case of the New Testament excellent help has been afforded by many recent translators, notably by Dr. Moffatt. In a wide experience among working men and women we have found frequent requests for a simple version of the Old Testament in similar language to that employed in the modern versions of the New Testament. By the generous help of our colleagues in this enterprise we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship.

Literary elegance has been sacrificed to clearness of expression and simplicity of language. In the present book Major Povah has admirably reproduced the tenderness and the stormy passion which distinguish Hosea amongst the books of the Old Testament.

We are grateful for the reception given to those already issued, and have tried to benefit by many helpful criticisms received, for which we are thankful.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed by us.

G.C.M.  
T.H.R.

NOTE.—Throughout the footnotes, LXX denotes the Septuagint, i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made from a Hebrew text between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era ; and MT the Massoretic Text, i.e., the traditional Hebrew Text.

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# THE BOOK OF HOSEA

## INTRODUCTION.

**A**LL Israelite history runs back to Moses and implies (1) a remarkable deliverance from the Egyptians in the neighbourhood of Suez, which was ascribed to the God of Moses ; (2) a covenant in the desert, in which Moses persuaded a number of independent tribes to adopt one religion, and thus laid the foundation of their national life in the recognition of a national God. The name of the God who had spoken to him in the desert, was Yahweh.

This covenant is sometimes regarded as the marriage of Yahweh and Israel (e.g. Hosea ii. 2, 7, 16, 19, 20, etc.), sometimes as Yahweh's generous adoption of Israel to be His son (e.g. Hosea xi. 1 ; Exodus iv. 22.).

In the minds of the majority Yahweh was associated with the storm. Yet by the best minds in Israel He was felt to be more than the personification of a force of nature. It was held that Yahweh need not have been the God of Israel unless He had wanted to be ; He had chosen to be Israel's God although He could have got on without Israel. The thought of Yahweh's free choice of Israel did not necessarily lead at once to Monotheism. But it carried with it the thought that Yahweh had a free will of His own—that He had character, personality—that He was not an *It* but a *He*. Hence He required more of His people than sacrifices ; He required social justice.

As the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan they took over the sanctuaries of the Canaanite gods and made them sanctuaries of Yahweh. But they took over with them much of the Canaanite theology and applied it to Yahweh. They also adopted to a considerable extent the debased morals of the Canaanites.

So, in the middle of the eighth century B.C., though Elisha and Jehu had followed up the work of Elijah by exterminating many of the worshippers of the Baal of Tyre, which god Jezebel had proposed to substitute for Yahweh as the national God, the religion of the bulk of the Israelites did not differ much from

that of the surrounding nations. The religion of Yahweh had forcibly absorbed the worshippers of the Baal of Tyre ; but it had absorbed their theology and morality with them.

The surrounding nations worshipped their Baalim. These Baalim (plural of Baal—"lord," "owner," "husband") were usually nature gods—symbols of the forces of nature or symbols of the "life force." To worship the Baal of the vine is not to worship the mere plant, but to worship the power that makes it grow—the "life force."

But if men picture their gods on the lines of the forces of nature, or on the lines of the "life force," or the drive of the primitive instincts in animals and men, they will inevitably use cruel and immoral rites in their worship. Are earthquakes kind ? Are all men clean-minded ?

In the time of Hosea Yahweh was looked upon, by the majority of Israelites at any rate, simply as the Baal of Israel. Other nations had their own Baalim. The worship of Yahweh was often idolatrous. Yahweh was worshipped with the assistance of an idol in the form of a bull. This stood for the strength and productive power of Yahweh.

Hosea Ben-Beer<sup>1</sup> was a younger contemporary of Amos. He belonged to the kingdom of Northern Israel. He fell in love with and married Gomer Bath-Diblain.<sup>2</sup> He loved her greatly. But the happiness of Hosea's home was "as a morning cloud, as the dew that passes early away." Gomer was not true to him.

Now Hosea's whole life is bound up in his love for Gomer. Why is he so cruelly tortured ? Is his love for Gomer a mistake ? Are all the best things in life simply cruel delusions, mere will-o'-the-wisps ? Is his home ruined for ever ? Shall he try to forget Gomer ?

No. As he thinks it all over, he feels that his love for Gomer is not a mistake, not a delusion, not something to be forgotten. It has been "the beginning of Yahweh's speaking with him."<sup>3</sup> It is through his love for Gomer that Yahweh has been calling him to be a prophet. His love for Gomer is from Yahweh. It is bringing him cruel suffering. But so is Yahweh's love for Israel bringing cruel suffering to Yahweh. For, as Gomer has been false to Hosea, so has Israel been false to Yahweh.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ben = "son of."

<sup>2</sup> Bath = "daughter of."

<sup>3</sup> Hosea i. (2).

A national god was often looked upon as the husband of his people. As the Baal of Israel, Yahweh was regarded as the husband of Israel.

Hosea's charge against Israel is similar to that of Amos. The religion of Yahweh is popular, but the character of Yahweh is misunderstood. For instance, Hosea's view of Jehu's massacre of the worshippers of the Baal of Tyre is very different from that of the later historian which appears in 2 Kings x. 30.<sup>1</sup> To Hosea this massacre in the name of Yahweh is a crime.<sup>2</sup>

Presently Hosea's home breaks up altogether. But his love for Gomer does not die. She is sold into bondage. He redeems her. But he feels that they cannot attempt to live together again at once. They must live apart for a time in hope of the eventual restoration of their home life.<sup>3</sup>

And thus, Hosea feels, Yahweh will have to deal with Israel. Israel must go into exile. In exile she must abide many days, unable to carry out the ritual of Yahweh's religion, just as Gomer must abide many days apart from her husband.<sup>4</sup>

No more is known of the future of Hosea and Gomer. Was their home life restored? Was Hosea perhaps killed or deported in 734 B.C., or in 722 B.C.? We do not know. At any rate there is no sure reference in his book to either of the deportations.

In 722 B.C. the Assyrians captured Samaria. They deported many of the inhabitants and introduced conquered foreigners in their place, in accordance with the Assyrian method of making concerted rebellion difficult. Thus were produced the half-Israelite, half-heathen, Samaritans, important in New Testament times.

It seems that among those of the Northern Israelites who were not deported, were some of the disciples of Hosea, and that they

---

<sup>1</sup> This historian asserts—"Yahweh said unto Jehu, Because thou has executed well that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my mind, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel."

<sup>2</sup> Hosea i. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea iii. 1-3.

<sup>4</sup> Hosea iii. 4.

collected and wrote down fragments of his utterances. The book thus formed was subsequently edited and expanded by editors in Judah.

Thus the book is not an easy one to read. In places there seems to be little connection between one sentence and the next. There are some obvious additions. Even when these have been removed, there are a good many passages which some scholars attribute to the prophet's editors rather than to the prophet himself. Moreover, the text has suffered a great deal in transmission, and in several of those passages in which the traditional Hebrew text (MT) defies translation, there is a remarkable lack of agreement between scholars as to how it should be amended.<sup>1</sup>

None the less Hosea's editors seem on the whole to have treated him fairly and to have introduced into his book very little which is not in accordance with his spirit. Nor do the numerous places in which the exact meaning is uncertain, leave room for doubt as to what are the main lines of the prophet's teaching. The personality of the prophet is impressed on the whole book. And the book introduces us to one of the finest figures of history—the Prophet of Love.

The followers of Hosea carried on his message. It seems that the nucleus of Deuteronomy was put together by the followers of Hosea and the followers of Isaiah. And the highest note in Deuteronomy is the note which runs through the whole of Hosea—Love. Yahweh loves Israel and Israel must love Yahweh.

To-day a Jewish child repeats, in the course of his morning and evening prayers, Deut. vi. 4 and 5—"Listen, O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is one—and you shall love the LORD your God with all your intellect,<sup>2</sup> with all your instincts,<sup>3</sup> and with all your 'muchness' (your 'self as a whole')."

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<sup>1</sup> Help can sometimes be obtained from the Greek version (LXX).

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew "heart." But to Hebrew psychology the heart is the seat of the intellect. "Heart" in the Bible must often be understood to mean "mind."

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew word for "soul" also means "appetite," "desire," "emotion."

## TABLE OF DATES.

	B.C.
David .. .. .	about 1000
Disruption: Northern Israel and Judah separate Kingdoms .. .. .	933
Elijah prophesying .. .. .	about 860
“ J ” Editors active in Judah .. .. .	9th century
Jehu massacres worshippers of Baal of Tyre in Valley of Jezreel .. .. .	842
Jeroboam II., King of N. Israel .. .. .	783
“ E ” Editors active in N. Israel (Ephraim) .. .. .	8th century
Amos prophesying .. .. .	about 760
Hosea's call to be a Prophet .. .. .	
Death of Jeroboam II. ; his son Zechariah succeeds him	743
Shallum kills Zechariah (end of House of Jehu) and becomes King .. .. .	743
Menahem kills Shallum and becomes King .. .. .	743
Call of Isaiah to be a Prophet .. .. .	740
Menahem pays tribute to Assyria .. .. .	738
Death of Menahem ; his son Pekahiah succeeds him	737
Pekah kills Pekahiah and becomes King .. .. .	736
Pekah and Rezin, King of Damascus, join a coalition against Assyria ; they attack Judah to force her to join them ; Judah, against advice of Isaiah, calls in Assyria to help her .. .. .	735
Assyrian invasion of N. Israel ; Assyrians deport a great part of population of Galilee .. .. .	733
Hoshea (not the Prophet) kills Pekah and is made King by the Assyrians .. .. .	730
He rebels against the Assyrians .. .. .	725
Assyrians take Samaria—end of the history of the “ Ten Tribes ” of Northern Israel .. .. .	722
Sennacherib fails to take Jerusalem .. .. .	701
Disciples of Hosea and disciples of Isaiah compiling nucleus of the Book of Deuteronomy .. .. .	
Deuteronomic Reformation in Judah .. .. .	621



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# HOSEA.

## PREFACE.

### *Chapter i. 1.*

*Probably by a Judæan editor. Note precedence given to Kings of Judah. Hosea's work was in Northern Israel. It is doubtful whether Hosea was still prophesying when Hezekiah came to the throne. In any case Jeroboam II. died before that date.*

This is Yahweh's message which came to Hosea Ben-Beerî in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—in the reign of Jeroboam Ben-Joash, king of Israel.

## HOSEA'S MARRIAGE. PART I.

### *Chapter i. 2 to 9.*

*Yahweh's call to Hosea to be a prophet came to him through his love for Gomer. Gomer was not what the world calls "a girl of bad character," before Hosea married her. She is compared throughout the book to Israel, whom Hosea clearly considers to have been what the world calls "innocent," in the days of Moses when Yahweh married her (see ix. 10, xi. 1). Gomer must soon have made Hosea's home life unhappy. But she is not at first, at any rate so far as Hosea knows, unfaithful to him in the legal sense of the word. Hosea does not, it seems, doubt that Jezreel is his own child.*

*By calling the child Jezreel<sup>1</sup> Hosea compares the relation of himself and Gomer to that of Yahweh and Israel. Jezreel, the child, is a constant reminder to Hosea that Gomer, his wife, is utterly out of sympathy with him. Jezreel, the valley, where Jehu massacred the worshippers of the Baal of Tyre, is a constant reminder to Yahweh that Israel, His wife, is utterly out of sympathy with Him.*

*As the name he gives her indicates, Hosea realises that Lo-ruchamah<sup>2</sup> is not his child. But he forgives Gomer and does not divorce her. Thus Lo-ruchamah counts as a legitimate child of Hosea in the eyes of the world. She thus resembles the Israelites, who are brought up in the religion of Yahweh but are quite ignorant of His real character. They are thus bastards,<sup>3</sup> calling themselves the children of Yahweh, to whose religion they are devoted, but in reality the children of Israel's "lovers," the Baalim or nature gods of Canaan. They are looked upon by Yahweh, just as Gomer's third child is looked upon by Hosea, as Lo-ammi<sup>4</sup>—"not my people."*

*Children were not weaned until they were two or three years old. So the events recorded in i. 2-9 must have extended over some years.*

This is the way in which Yahweh began to communicate his message to Hosea.

Yahweh put it into Hosea's mind to woo and marry a girl of treacherous character—one who would bear him children not his own.

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<sup>1</sup> Jezreel—"God sows." Note word-play on "Israel." Note word-play in ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ruchamah—"She has been loved"—"she has been pitied"—"her father has sympathy for her."

Lo-ruchamah—"Lo," being the negative in Hebrew, reverses the meaning.

<sup>3</sup> See Hebrews xii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ammi—"my people"—"akin to me."

Lo-ammi—"not my people"—"not akin to me."

[And why ?] Because the country was persistently committing adultery by being treacherous to Yahweh.

So Hosea wooed and married Gomer Bath-Diblaim. And when she had borne him a son, Yahweh put it into his mind to call the child Jezreel.

[And why ?] Because very soon Yahweh would punish the dynasty of Jehu for the massacre of Jezreel and would put an end to the sovereignty of Israel. On that "Day"<sup>1</sup> Yahweh would break the army of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

When Gomer had borne another child, a daughter, Yahweh put it into Hosea's mind to call the child Lo-ruchamah.

[And why ?] Because Yahweh would no longer be moved by a father's sympathy for the Israelites to take their iniquity away.<sup>2</sup>

When Gomer had weaned Lo-ruchamah she bore a son. And Yahweh put it into Hosea's mind to call the child Lo-ammi.

[And why ?] Because the Israelites were not Yahweh's people, and Yahweh would not be their God.

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<sup>1</sup> Day of Armageddon (Har-Megiddo=Hill of Megiddo), or Day of Jezreel. There is a great plain or valley dividing the hill country of Samaria from the hill country of Galilee. The north-west portion of this plain was called the Plain of Esdraelon or the Plain of Megiddo. This portion drains into the river Kishon. The south-east portion of the plain was called the Valley of Jezreel and drains into the Jordan.

A consideration of the map will show that this great plain must always have provided the chief battlefield of Israel. Thus "a day of Armageddon" or "a day of Jezreel" means a day of battle. Whether the battle is to be won or lost depends on the context. For one great "day of Armageddon" see Judges iv. and v. The great "day of Yahweh" was to the contemporaries of Amos the great "day" on which Yahweh would conquer all Israel's enemies. Compare the German "Der Tag." To Amos himself the day of Yahweh was the great "day" on which Yahweh would punish Israel. So Hosea says that "on that day" Yahweh will break the army of Israel on the battlefield of Jezreel or Armageddon (i. 5). Once Israel has been punished, the "day" becomes a day of restoration (i. 11; ii. 16; 18; 21;—compare the "latter days" in iii. 5). The "day" thus stands for the unique interest in history displayed by the Hebrews—an interest due to their belief that history is no objectless cycle of golden, silver, bronze and iron ages (as it is to Greek and Indian thought), but that behind history is the living God.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 7 is an addition; see below.

Chapter i. 7.

*A later addition—note awkwardness of grammar—probably added after Sennacherib's failure to take Jerusalem in 701 B.C.*

But Yahweh would be moved by a father's sympathy for the Judæans and would save them by the help of Yahweh their God ; he would not save them by the help of their bows and swords and equipment, or of their chariots and cavalry.

HOSEA'S MARRIAGE. PART II.

Chapter ii. 2 to 23.

*Between the narrative of i. 2-9 and that of iii. 1-4 occur some important events which are not recorded. In i. 9 Hosea seems to allow Lo-ammi to be reckoned as a member of his family, i.e., he forgives Gomer. Does he afterwards divorce her? Or does she run away from him? At any rate his home breaks up altogether. When next we hear of Gomer, she has come to grief and has had to barter her independence for her maintenance by becoming a bondservant. Hebrew bondservice was indentured labour rather than slavery. But in the case of Gomer the bondservice is clearly of a disreputable kind. Has she become a common prostitute? Or has she become a concubine of a "lover"?*

*We do not know how long an interval elapsed between i. 9 and iii. 1. Much of ii. 2-23 seems to belong to the interval.*

*As Gomer has made Hosea suffer, so has Israel made Yahweh suffer.*

*Israel, like Gomer, thinks that she can easily reform herself when she likes, that Yahweh is very good-natured, that it will all come right in the end.*

*But Yahweh loves Israel with a boundless generosity. He loves her far too much to let her off. He will stick at nothing—spare neither Himself nor Israel—in His endeavour to make her what He meant her to be.*

*Israel must be removed from the luxuries of Canaan and put back into the desert to resume the nomadic life she led in the days of Moses. But this punishment is not vindictive.*

*It is part of the way in which Yahweh will woo her again and enable her to make a fresh start. (For what happened in the valley of Achor, see Joshua vii. 24-26.)*

Plead, O plead with your motherland.<sup>1</sup> Let her give up her inveterate prostitution, her shameless adultery. Lest I strip her naked like a convicted adulteress and reduce her to what she was at the beginning of her history—yes, make the land like the wilderness, turn it into a desert, and kill the soil with drought.

For her children I will not be moved by a father's sympathy. They are bastards. For their motherland has become a prostitute. She who bore them has disgraced herself. For she thought—"I will follow my lovers, who give me my bread and water, my wool and linen, my oil and wine."

So, see, I am going to make a thorn hedge across the road—build a wall across the path. She shall fail to find her way.

So when she has run after her lovers but failed to catch them, when she has searched for them but failed to find them, she will say to herself—"I will go back to my first husband, for I had better luck in the old times than I have nowadays."

And she—even she—does not know that it is I who have given her that corn and wine and oil—that it is I who have made her rich in gold and silver.<sup>2</sup> Therefore I will withdraw the corn which I give her at the harvest, and the wine which I give her at the vintage. I will snatch away my wool and my linen, which I give her for clothing. Yes! now will I uncover her shame before her lovers. Not one of them shall be able to rescue her from me. I will bring to an end all her merry pilgrimages, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her festivals. I will lay waste her vines and her fig-trees, which she looked on as her earnings—as wages paid her by her lovers. I will turn them into a jungle. Wild animals shall devour them. I will punish her for keeping the feasts of the Baalim—feasts at

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<sup>1</sup> MT adds "for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband"—a marginal note, which spoils rhythm of Hebrew and is contrary to the whole spirit of the book.

<sup>2</sup> MT adds "which they made into an image of the Baal"—a scribe's marginal note. The golden bull was meant to be an image of Yahweh.

which she makes offerings to them, decks herself in ear-rings and jewelry, follows her lovers and forgets me.

Yahweh whispers in my ear—So, see, I am going to make love to her. I will lead her into the wilderness. I will speak kindly to her. There [she shall make a fresh start]. I will give her her vineyards. I will make the pass of Achor a gate of hope. There she shall respond to my love, just as she responded in her youth, at the time when she came up from Egypt.

On that “day”—Yahweh whispers in my ear—she<sup>1</sup> shall call me her husband and shall no longer call me her Baal. I will make the very names of the Baalim obsolete words in the language of Israel. Their very names shall be forgotten.

I will make peace on that “day” between the Israelites and the wild animals, the birds and the reptiles. I will break the bow, the sword and all weapons of war and cast them out of the country. I will make the Israelites lie down in security.

I will betroth you to myself [O Israel] for ever. Yes, I will betroth you to myself, giving you the virtues of loyalty and justice, of affection and sympathy, as my bridal gift.<sup>2</sup> Yes, I will betroth you to myself, giving you the virtue of constancy as my bridal gift, and you shall know Yahweh.

In that “day” I will respond—Yahweh whispers in my ear—I will respond to the call of the sky and it shall respond to the call of the land; the land shall respond to the call of the corn, the wine and the oil, and they shall respond to the call of Jezreel. I will sow Jezreel in the land to be my own. I will be moved by a father’s sympathy for Lo-ruchamah. I will call Lo-ammi my people, and he shall call me his God.

## HOSEA’S MARRIAGE. PART III.

### *Chapter iii. I to 4.*

*As Yahweh treats Israel, so Hosea treats Gomer.*

Yahweh put it into my mind to woo [Gomer] again, to love her—this wife with a lover, this adulteress.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT, “you.”

<sup>2</sup> Dowry with which a man bought a wife.



[And why ?] Such was Yahweh's love for the Israelites, though they were looking to other gods and in love with cakes of raisins !<sup>1</sup>

So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels in money and fifteen shekels' worth of barley.<sup>2</sup> Then I told her that for a long time she must [live alone and] wait for me, having no relations with men—yes, that for a long time I myself could not live with her.

[And why ?] Because for a long time the Israelites would have to [live alone and] wait—without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without idol of Yahweh or image.

## A PROMISE OF RESTORATION.

*Chapter iii. 5, plus i. 10 to ii. 1, which seems to belong here.*

*Many think that this passage is not by Hosea. Note reference to the ideal king of the house of David. At any rate it is in the spirit of Hosea.*

Afterwards the Israelites shall again resort to Yahweh, their God, and to [the son of] David, their king. In the "latter days" they shall come with trembling to Yahweh—come with trembling to [experience] his kindness.

The Israelites shall be as numerous as the grains of sand by the sea, which cannot be measured or counted.

Instead of being called Lo-ammi, they shall be called sons of the living God.

The Judæans and Israelites shall join hands and set over themselves one commander. They shall conquer<sup>3</sup> the country, for glorious shall be the "day" of Jezreel.

Call your brothers "Ammi" and your sisters "Ruchamah."

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<sup>1</sup> Used in worship of the Baal of the vine and taken over by the popular Yahweh religion.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be the meaning. Thirty shekels was the price of a bondservant.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning of phrase thus translated is uncertain.

Chapter iv. 1 to 14.

*The priests derived their income from the popular religion—a religion in which Yahweh was worshipped but his character was misunderstood.*

*In most religions sacred prostitution has been practised as part of the ritual. It was practised in Canaan. After the Conquest it seems to have been taken over by the popular Yahweh religion.*

*We have here an eighth century B.C. denunciation of the view which prescribes one code of sexual morality for women and allows another for men.*

O Israelites, hear Yahweh's message. Yahweh has a quarrel with the inhabitants of the country. For there is no truth, kindness, or knowledge of God in the country—only perjury, murder, theft, adultery, violence. Murder follows hard on murder. That is the reason of these frequent droughts—when all who live in the country pine away—even the wild animals and the birds—when the very fish lie in heaps [in the dry river-beds]. But what good can a man do by quarrelling and uttering reproaches? My people are merely imitating their priests.<sup>1</sup>

O priests, you persistently stumble when<sup>1</sup> you have the light, and the prophets also stumble with you. The darkness comes! I will destroy your whole caste.

Destroy! My people have let you destroy them because they do not know me. Because you, priests, have refused to know me, I refuse to recognise you as my priests. Because you have forgotten the ideal of your God, I—even I—will forget the members of your profession.

The greater the influence of the priests the more they err concerning me. I will bring their glorious office into contempt. They derive their income from my people's error. They greedily encourage my people in their perverted religion.

So the people will become as bad as the priests. I must punish them for their conduct and pay them back in their

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<sup>1</sup> Text here is corrupt. Most commentators agree that this is the general sense.

own coin. They will eat but not be satisfied. They will commit fornication but not multiply. For they have ceased to take any notice of Yahweh.

Fornication, wine and new wine deprive men of their wits. My people ask advice of their sacred trees—their diviners' rods declare to them [my will]! For lust for prostitutes has so muddled their brains, that they have [prostituted their intelligence to idolatry and] committed adultery against their God.

On the tops of the mountains they sacrifice, on the hills they make offerings—under oaks, poplars and terebinths, which provide convenient shade. That is why their daughters are always committing fornication and their wives adultery. I will not punish their daughters for committing fornication nor their wives for committing adultery. For they themselves go aside with harlots and maintain temple prostitutes at [my] sanctuaries.

A people is ruined when it will not think!

#### *Chapter iv. 15 to 19. Fragmentary Utterances.*

Although you, Israel, are committing adultery against me, I would not have Judah share your guilt.

Do not attend the sanctuary of Gilgal! Do not go up to Bethel!<sup>1</sup> Forbear in Beer-Sheba<sup>2</sup> to protest your devotion to me!

Yes, Israel jibs like a jibbing heifer!

How then can Yahweh let the Israelites graze like lambs in a broad pasture land?

Ephraim<sup>3</sup> is wedded to idols! [What can Yahweh do but] let him alone?

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<sup>1</sup> Bethel—from “Beth,” house, and “El,” God—means “House of God.” It was the chief sanctuary of Yahweh in Northern Israel. But, owing to the fact that Yahweh was worshipped there under the form of a bull, Hosea calls the place Bethaven—from “Beth,” house, and “Aven,” idolatry—“house of idols.”

<sup>2</sup> Inserted by many commentators to restore the rhythm.

<sup>3</sup> Ephraim—son of Joseph—often stands for Northern Israel. Word-play occurs in Hosea with Peri, “fruit,” and Pere, “wild ass.”

The Israelites are a drunken mob,<sup>1</sup> obsessed by lust for prostitutes. Israel's rulers have fallen in love with dishonour. The wind will snatch her up, like a "dust devil,"<sup>2</sup> and whirl her away. The Israelites will wish they had never trusted in their sacrifices.

*Chapter v. 1 to 14.*

*The government—by commission, license, taxation, etc.—make their profit out of the popular Yahweh religion.*

*Hosea predicts the destruction of the Ten Tribes of Northern Israel—a prediction fulfilled in 722 B.C.*

Hear this, you priests! Listen, all Israelites! Court of the King, attend! It is against you that this sentence is pronounced. For you have proved a snare at Mizpah—spread yourself like a fowler's net on Tabor.

They have deepened<sup>3</sup> the pit which was made at Shittim.<sup>4</sup> But I will be a scourge to them all. I know Ephraim—yes, Israel cannot hide himself from me. Already, Ephraim, you have committed adultery against me—yes, Israel has let himself be defiled. Their own habits prevent them from returning to their God. They are obsessed by lust for prostitutes. So they do not know Yahweh. Time after time does the Majesty of Israel give clear evidence against him. But time after time to the Ephraimites<sup>5</sup> fall, tripped up by the iniquity [they do not recognise]. (Judah, too, has tripped up with them!) Time after time with sacrifices of sheep and oxen do they make efforts to seek Yahweh, but they never find him. He eludes them.

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<sup>1</sup> Slight amendments of MT are necessary to render it translatable.

<sup>2</sup> "Dust devil"—a column of dust driven along by the wind in a whirling spiral (cf. "the wings of the wind").

<sup>3</sup> Changing one letter of untranslatable MT in accordance with many commentators.

<sup>4</sup> See Numbers xxv. 1-9.

<sup>5</sup> MT adds "Israel"—a marginal note.

They have defrauded Yahweh. For they have let their children grow up in ignorance of him.

Next month may see the end of them and of their estates! Sound the alarm in Gibeah! Blow the cornet in Ramah! From Bethel<sup>1</sup> call Benjamin to arms! Oh, Ephraim, on the day of your punishment you will be utterly exterminated.

Against the tribes of Israel I make a prediction which will certainly be fulfilled.

The nobles of Judah are no better than common swindlers. I will drown them in the deluge of my anger.

Ephraim is oppressed—his national independence is stamped out. [And why?] Because he has obstinately followed idols.<sup>2</sup>

So it is I, like moth, who am devouring Ephraim—like dry rot, devouring the Judæans. Ephraim has perceived the sickness [of the state] and Judah has perceived his wounds. So Ephraim has resorted to Assyria—sent for help to the Great King.<sup>3</sup> But he cannot possibly heal you or cure your wounds. For it is I, like a lion, who am preying on Ephraim—yes, like a young lion, on the Judæans. It is I—I myself, who will mangle you and make off with you. I will drag you away and none shall be able to rescue you.

#### *Chapter v. 15 to vi. 6.*

*The God of the Prophets is not omnipotent in the sense of having left Himself free to do anything He likes—the omnipotence of childish day-dreams. By giving men some power of choice—making them not machines but men—He has limited His own power, rendered Himself liable to be frustrated by them—to suffer at their hands.*

I will leave them and return to my temple [in heaven] until they suffer the consequences of their guilt and seek my presence.

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<sup>1</sup> See note on iv. 15-19.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT, "a line."

<sup>3</sup> Reading *Melek rab* for *Melek Jareb*.

When they are in trouble, they always seek me energetically enough, saying—

“Come, let us return to Yahweh. For it is he who has mangled us, but only to heal us. It is he who has smitten us, but only to bind up our wounds. He will revive us in two or three days—set us on our feet that we may live in his presence. Oh, let us know Yahweh, let us run after Yahweh that we may know him! As soon as we seek<sup>1</sup> him energetically we<sup>2</sup> shall find him. He will come to us like the rains, like the spring showers which water the soil.”

What can I make of you, Ephraim—what can I make of you, Judah—when your affection for me is like a morning mist, like dew that passes early away?

That is why I have [but] shattered my people by [sending them] the prophets—that is why my promises have [only] brought them death—why my<sup>3</sup> justice proves a lightning flash [to strike them].

For it is your affection that I delight in, not your sacrifices—yes, your knowledge of God, not your burnt offerings.

#### *Chapter vi. 7 to vii. 7.*

*Very difficult. In places MT defies translation and commentators differ even as regards the general sense conveyed by the original.*

But they, like ordinary men, have broken their covenant [with me]. Look! It is there that they have been false to me! Gilead is a city of criminals—the roads to it are marked by trails of blood!

Like brigands in ambush gangs of priests murder people seeking asylum at Shechem.<sup>4</sup> Yes, they have committed atrocities.

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<sup>1</sup> Transposing one letter of MT.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT, “his going forth.”

<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT, “thy.”

<sup>4</sup> Shechem was a city of priests and a city of refuge from the blood feud for a man who had killed another accidentally (Joshua xx. and xxi. 21).

In the land of Israel I see appalling things ! There Ephraim is committing adultery against me—yes, Israel has let himself be defiled. Judah too—there is a harvest to be reaped by you !

When I try to restore my people, when I try to heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim discloses itself and the crimes of Samaria—sharp practice in business, burglary, brigandage. Yet it never occurs to them that I remember all their crimes. They are already utterly in the grip of bad habits. But I know them through and through.

By wickedness they curry favour with the king. By lies they curry favour with the nobles. They are all adulterers—like an oven heated by the baker ; he may stop stirring up the fire while fermentation is taking place !<sup>1</sup>

At court ceremonies the nobles get dead drunk.

The king associates with wasters.

Yes, their minds are hot<sup>2</sup> as an oven with their intrigues. All night their anger [merely] slumbers.<sup>3</sup> In the morning it is blazing like a flame.

They all grow hot as an oven [with intrigues].

Like cannibals they devour their rulers ! All their kings have been assassinated—not one of them calling to me for help.

### *Chapter vii. 8 to 16.*

*Like Isaiah, Hosea denounces alliances with foreign nations as treason against Yahweh Sabaoth—the God of the armies of Israel—Israel's protector.*

Ephraim apes the heathen. Ephraim is a half-baked cake. Foreign [fashions] have sapped his vigour, but he himself is unaware of it. Yes, he has a grey hair here and there ; but he himself is unaware of it. Time after time does the Majesty of Israel give clear evidence against him. Yet the Israelites have never returned to Yahweh their God nor sought him—not even for all this !

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<sup>1</sup> Very difficult ; reading and sense uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT, “ they bring near.”

<sup>3</sup> Very difficult ; reading and sense uncertain.

Ephraim is like a silly dove [fluttering about aimlessly]. They will call in the Egyptians! They will resort to Assyria for help! As soon as they go I will catch them in my net—shoot them like a bird.<sup>1</sup> . . .

Alas for them! For they have fluttered away, [frightened of] me.

Destruction upon them! For they have rebelled against me.

And I—can I rescue them when they themselves propagate a false view of me?

They have never prayed to me honestly. They merely howl beside their altars<sup>2</sup> for corn and wine. They lacerate themselves<sup>3</sup> according to the ritual. But [when I would lead them on] they jib.

It was I who trained them and made them strong. Yet it is of me that they are suspicious.

They are ever returning to idols.<sup>4</sup> They are like a bow which never hits the target.

Their nobles will be put to death because of their arrogant boasting. Israel will be derided for this by the Egyptians.

### *Chapter viii. I to 14.*

*Israel's religion is a dope. He refuses to face the living God and the great ideal the living God has set before him. Israel worships Yabweh, but wants a dead Yabweh, not a living Yabweh. Hence Israel seeks to reduce Yabweh to an idol in order to gratify his religious feelings without facing the living Yabweh and striving to live up to His ideal.*

*It seems that Hosea was the first prophet explicitly and unequivocally to denounce the practice of employing golden bulls to represent Yabweh. To the people in general the bull of Samaria was most sacred. To say that it was not God was blasphemous! But Hosea does not regard golden bulls as the*

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<sup>1</sup> Rest of verse 12 very difficult and uncertain; here omitted.

<sup>2</sup> MT, "beds."

<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT, "throng," See 1 Kings xviii. 28.

<sup>4</sup> So LXX; MT, meaningless.



*only kind of idols. Diplomacy, politics, etc., become idols, just — as easily as do the adjuncts of religious worship, if they are regarded as substitutes for the living God.*

*One symptom of Israel's inability to face the living God is his desire to safeguard his little country by a foreign alliance.*

*King-making is another symptom. Does Hosea refer to the objection to having a king at all, which appears in the later of the two accounts of the beginning of the monarchy in 1 Samuel? Or to the revolt of Jeroboam I. in 933 B.C.? Or to the events of 743 B.C.?*

Trumpeter, sound the alarm ! Like a vulture [the Assyrian swoops down] on Yahweh's own country !

It is because the Israelites have broken their covenant with me and rebelled against my ideal.

To me they will cry—call me their God—say, “ We Israelites know thee.” Israel has repudiated what is good. Let the enemy rout him !

They have made kings without my consent—princes whom I never recognized. Of their own silver and gold they have made idols [of me]—to gratify their religious feelings, but to separate themselves from me !

<sup>1</sup> I will repudiate the miserable bull [you have made for me], Samaria. They rouse me to anger ! How long shall I have to continue to punish them ! Yes,—this is Israel's idea [of me !] A smith made it ! It is not God !

Samaria's miserable bull shall be smashed to atoms.

Yes [their religion is] a sowing of mere wind, but its harvest will be a tornado.

Should their seed spring up, it cannot spread. It will never yield bread. Should it yield bread, this would be devoured by foreigners.

Devoured ! Israel is devoured ! They are already an unmarketable commodity among the nations. For they have grovelled to Assyria ! (Ever a fractious wild ass is Ephraim !)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MT, “ he has repudiated.”

<sup>2</sup> Word play between Ephraim and Pere, “ wild ass.”

They have hired lovers! Even if they make a present of themselves to all the nations, now will I whip them in. They must cease<sup>1</sup> for a while <sup>2</sup>from anointing kings and princes.<sup>2</sup>

For the more altars Ephraim has built,<sup>3</sup> the further have they led him from the goal. Were I to write down for him the outline of my ideal, he would think it belonged to a foreign religion!

The Israelites offer sacrifices to hold communion [with Yahweh]. Yahweh does not accept them. Now must he remember their iniquity and punish their errors. They must return to Egypt.

Israel has forgotten his maker and built palaces!

Judah has constructed a chain of fortresses. So I must light a fire in his cities to consume their citadels.

### *Chapter ix. 1 to 8.*

*The teaching of Moses about Yahweh has been obscured by the heathen ideas which have been taken over from the Canaanites by the popular Yahweh religion. Hence either Assyria or Egypt—Hosea does not know which—will conquer and deport Israel.*

Rejoice not so loudly, O Israel, in your heathenish religion! It is merely adultery against your God. You love to indulge in immoral harvest rites on all your threshing floors.

Threshing floors! Their threshing floors and wine vats will not nourish them. Their new wine will disappoint them!<sup>4</sup> They<sup>5</sup> will pour out no drink offerings to Yahweh and prepare<sup>6</sup> him no sacrifices. Their bread<sup>7</sup> will be like the bread of

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT, "and they began."

<sup>2-2</sup> So LXX; MT, "from the burden of a king, princes."

<sup>3</sup> MT adds "to sin."

<sup>4</sup> So LXX; MT, "her."

<sup>5</sup> Transposing verses 3 and 4.

<sup>6</sup> MT, "be sweet"?

<sup>7</sup> M'T, "they have."

mourners. All who eat of it will thereby make themselves unclean.<sup>1</sup> For they will eat merely to appease their hunger and not to hold communion with Yahweh.

<sup>2</sup>[And why ?] They cannot remain in Yahweh's land. Ephraim must return to Egypt. In Assyria they must eat unclean food.<sup>1</sup>

Alas, for the festival days ! Alas, for the days of pilgrimage to Yahweh !

For see ! they must go to Assyria.<sup>3</sup> Egypt must be their rendezvous. [There they will die and] be buried in the cemetery of Memphis. As for their precious silver idols—thistles shall replace them, thorns shall grow in their sanctuaries.

Arrived is the time of punishment ! Arrived is the time of retribution ! Oh, let the Israelites perceive it !

[Why say you]—"The prophet is irreligious, the inspired man is mad" ?

Because of your great iniquity and your great animosity [against me for speaking of it].

I<sup>4</sup> am Ephraim's watchman with my God. Wherever I go they lay traps for me. There is animosity against me among the priests of my God.

### *Chapter ix. 9 to 17.*

*Verse 9 seems to refer to Judges xix. 22. For Baal-Peor see Numbers (xxv. 1 to 3). Perversions of religion and perversions of the sex instinct are closely connected. Sexual malpractices have rotted the vigour of the nation. This is shown by the falling birth-rate. Contrast the freshness and vigour of the early days of the nation, suggested in verse 10a. Yet what matters the falling birth-rate ? Soon all the children who are being brought up, will be destroyed by the invader.*

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<sup>1</sup> Mourners, being "unclean" by the dead, could not eat of sacrificial meals. Therefore they could not hold communion with Yahweh. In exile the Israelites would not be able to offer firstlings or first-fruits at any sanctuary of Yahweh. Therefore all their food would be "unclean."

<sup>2</sup> Transposing verses 3 and 4.

<sup>3</sup> MT, "from destruction."

<sup>4</sup> MT, "prophet."

*In the age of the prophets there was no doctrine of a life worth living beyond death. Children, by keeping a man's name alive on earth, provided what we may call a substitute for immortality. Childlessness was regarded by the Israelites as the worst possible curse. But so dreadful will be the destruction of Israel, that Hosea feels that childlessness will be better than the rearing of children to be slaughtered. Compare Jeremiah xvi. 1 to 4 and Paul's earlier view of marriage in 1 Corinthians vii., written when he expected that disasters, ushering in the end of the world, would shortly begin. Contrast Ephesians v. 22 to 33,<sup>1</sup> written when he had realised that the expectation of an immediate end of the world, taken over by the first generation of Christians from the Jewish Apocalyptists, was erroneous. Compare also Luke xxiii. 27 to 31, where Jesus predicts the horrors which were actually to occur at the siege and fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)*

ix. 9.

They practice unnatural vice—the sin of Gibeah. Yahweh must remember their perversion, punish their errors.

ix. 10, 11, 16, 12, 13.

[Delightful] as grapes in the wilderness was Israel when I found him there. Fresh as a first ripe fig were your fathers when I chose them. But when they came to Baal-peor, they consecrated themselves to Baal<sup>2</sup> and became as loathsome as the idols they loved.

Ephraim—fruitful Ephraim—his birth-rate is dwindling like a bird vanishing into the blue. No children, no motherhood, no fatherhood.

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<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament the writers, almost without noticing that they are doing so, ascribe the position held in the Old Testament by "message (or word) of Yahweh," "messenger (or angel) of Yahweh," "Yahweh," to Jesus of Nazareth. So in Ephesians v. 22-33 the figure of marriage, once employed by Hosea as a symbol of the relation of Yahweh to Israel, is now employed as a symbol of the relation of Christ to the Church—the new Israel. Compare use of word "saviour" in Hosea xiii. 4 and Ephesians v. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Reading Baal—later scribes so disliked this word that they often substituted Bosheth, "shame."

<sup>1</sup>Ephraim is a worm-eaten tree. His roots are dried up. No fruit can [the fruitful ones] bear. What children they bear—darlings of their mothers—I must kill!<sup>1</sup> Of what children they rear I must bereave them—not one shall survive. (Yes, alas for the parents too when I depart from them!) Ephraim's children are destined<sup>2</sup> to provide game for the sport of the nations. Ephraim can produce children merely to be slaughtered!

ix. 14. *Hosea speaks.*

Give them, O Yahweh—what can I ask thee to give them?—Best give them miscarrying wombs and shrivelling breasts!

ix. 15. *Yahweh speaks.*

All their crimes are focussed in [my sanctuary in] Gilgal. Yes, it is there that I began to hate them. Because of their evil habits I will expel them from my sanctuary. I will love them no more. All their leaders are jibbers!

ix. 17. *Hosea speaks.*

My God will reject them, because they have not listened to him. They must become vagabonds [Cains] among the nations!

*Chapter x. 1 and 2, 5 to 8.*

Israel was a luxuriant vine. He<sup>3</sup> grew richer and richer. The richer he grew, the more altars he built. The more prosperous his country, the finer the sacred pillars he made. But the Israelites are not single-minded. Now must they suffer punishment. [Yahweh] will break down their altars—ruin their sacred pillars.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Read 16 after 11.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT, "like I have seen Tyre transplanted."

<sup>3</sup> Meaning of MT very uncertain. (Translation here is in accordance with one of the numerous amendments which have been proposed.)

<sup>4</sup> For x. 3 to 4 see below; it seems to be out of its place.

For the <sup>1</sup>miserable bull of Bethel<sup>2</sup> the inhabitants of Samaria will lament.<sup>3</sup> Yes, its people will mourn for it. Its priests will be in agony<sup>4</sup> for it. For its rich gold will have been stripped off it and taken away to a foreign land. The object itself must be carried to Assyria as a “present” to the Great<sup>5</sup> King. Ephraim will be disgraced; yes, Israel will wish he had never trusted in his diplomacy.

Samaria will collapse—her king will be like a twig on a torrent!

The idolatrous high places—Israel’s error—will be destroyed. Thorns and thistles will grow on their altars. The Israelites will say to the mountains—“Cover us”—and to the hills—“Fall on us!”

### *Chapter x. 3 and 4.*

*Seems out of its place or a later addition.*

For now they will say—“We have no [real] king since we do not fear Yahweh. As for the king [we have], what can he do for us? Nothing but make<sup>6</sup> and break promises, and enter into alliances with foreigners—while his administration of justice is as useful as weeds among the corn!”

### *Chapter x. 9 to 11.*

*In verse 10 Israel’s “two perversions” are probably (a) the worship of Yahweh under the form of a bull, and (b) the monarchy. Or (c) unnatural vice (cf. “days of Gibeah”) may be one of them. Verses 9 and 10 are very difficult and uncertain.*

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT plural.

<sup>2</sup> See note on iv. 15 to 19.

<sup>3</sup> MT, “sojourn.”

<sup>4</sup> MT, “rejoice.”

<sup>5</sup> Reading *Melek rab* for *Melek Jareb*.

<sup>6</sup> So LXX; MT, “They make . . . their administration . . .”

Ever since the days of Gibeah<sup>1</sup> have you gone wrong, O Israel! The Israelites persist in that sin. Must not the attack be pressed home against Gibeah—against the black-guards?

<sup>2</sup>I will chastise them in my fury—nations shall combine against them to chastise<sup>3</sup> them for their two perversions.

Ephraim is a<sup>4</sup> heifer fond [of the easy work] of threshing corn. But I will fit a yoke on her fair neck. I will put Ephraim into draught. Judah must plough. Jacob must harrow before he can thresh.

#### *Chapter x. 12 to 13a.*

*Suggested by the agricultural metaphors of 11. See verses 12 to 13a in R.V. The Hebrew says “sow,” “reap,” “fallow ground,” “plough,” “reap,” because agriculture was the chief industry in Israel in the days of Hosea. The translation here given is a paraphrase, seeking to apply Hosea’s thought to a commercial community.*

Lay out your capital honestly. Make your profits in accordance with the law of kindness. Look into your business methods. It is time to seek Yahweh that he may come and teach you honesty. You have invested in evil enterprises. You have made unjust profits. You have lived on shams.

#### *Chapter x. 13b to 15.*

*There are at least five differing views as to who this Shalman was. Some event, well-known in the author’s day, is referred to.*

Since you have trusted in your policy—in the strength of your armies, the din of battle shall arise among your tribes. All

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<sup>1</sup> See Judges xix. 22.

<sup>2</sup> MT, “In my desire, that I may chastise them.”

<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT, “When they combine.”

<sup>4</sup> MT adds—“that is taught—a marginal note.

your fortresses shall be destroyed, as Shalman stormed Beth-arbel and destroyed it, dashing in pieces mothers and children. Thus must<sup>1</sup> I do to you, O Israelites,<sup>2</sup> because of your great wickedness. The king of Israel shall utterly collapse—[like a dream] in the morning!

*Chapter xi. 1 to 9.*

When Israel was a child, he attracted my love and I called him out of Egypt to adopt him as my son.

The more I<sup>3</sup> have called them the more they have avoided me.<sup>3</sup> It is with the Baalim that they hold communion—to images that they make offerings.

It was I who taught the baby Ephraimites to walk. [When they tumbled down] I <sup>4</sup>would pick them up in my<sup>4</sup> arms. Yet they never knew that I had healed their bruises.

I led them humanely with ropes of love<sup>5</sup> . . . .

Israel must<sup>6</sup> return to Egypt. The Assyrian must be his king. [And why?] Because the Israelites have refused to return [to me].

So the sword must be brandished against their cities. Their gates must be stormed. They will be swallowed up by their own diplomacy.

My people have a bias towards refusing to face me!<sup>7</sup>

How can I let you go, Ephraim? How surrender you, Israel? How can I let you become like Admah<sup>8</sup> or make you

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX; MT, "he did."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT, "Bethel."

<sup>3</sup> So LXX; MT, "they called them, so they went from before them."

<sup>4</sup> So LXX; MT, "he . . . . his."

<sup>5</sup> Rest of verse very difficult and uncertain; here omitted.

<sup>6</sup> Reading on lines of LXX.

<sup>7</sup> Rest of verse very difficult and uncertain; here omitted.

<sup>8</sup> Admah and Zeboiim, cities associated with Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis xiv. 2), cited by Hosea as examples of vice and subsequent destruction in the same way as Sodom and Gomorrah are cited by Amos iv. 11 and Isaiah.



like Zeboiim ? My mind recoils from the thought ! All my emotions are in conflict ! Must I not give effect to my anger ? Must I not come back<sup>1</sup> to destroy Ephraim ? For I am God and not man, in the midst of you a transcendent one. . . .<sup>2</sup>

*Chapter xi. 10 and 11. Later addition—note confused metaphors—a promise of restoration.*

They will follow Yahweh. Yahweh will roar like a lion—yes, it is he who will roar. Sons will hurry from the west. They will hurry, like sparrows, out of Egypt—yes, like doves, out of Assyria. Yahweh whispers in my ear—“ I will bring<sup>3</sup> them back to their own homes.”

*Chapter xi. 12, xii. 1 to 3a, 7 to 11, 14.*

*Hosea's unpopular view of the character of the national ancestor, Jacob (Ya'aqob), whose name resembles the verb 'aqab, “ to follow at the heel,” “ over-teach.” The Canaanites or Phœnicians were the great traders of the day. Ephraim considers that “ business is business,” and that one cannot afford to be over-particular ; but Yahweh will overthrow all Israel's commercial civilisation, taken over from the Canaanites, and reduce the Israelites to the nomads they were when he met them at Horeb.*

*Note the force of “ in whom there is no guile ” in John i. 47.*

Ephraim besets me with lies—yes, the Israelites beset me with falsehood.<sup>4</sup> . . .

---

<sup>1</sup> See v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rest of verse very difficult and uncertain ; here omitted.

<sup>3</sup> So LXX ; MT, “ will make them dwell.”

<sup>4</sup> Rest of verse, of uncertain meaning, is probably a later addition. It is here omitted.

What Ephraim feeds on is mere wind! The dreams he pursues are but a sirocco!<sup>1</sup> All day long they pile up lies and fraud.<sup>2</sup> They make treaties with Assyria—pay tribute in oil to Egypt. Yahweh has a quarrel with Judah. He must punish Jacob for his conduct—pay him back in his own coin.

In the womb [Jacob] overreached his brother.<sup>3</sup> He is a regular Canaanite—armed with false balances, loving extortion!

Ephraim thinks—“Well, at any rate, I have grown rich. I have made money. My profits are the result of fair business. They do not make my hands what anyone could call dirty.”

But I am Yahweh, your God since you came out of Egypt. I will make you nomads again as you were when I met you [at Horeb].

Time after time do I put my message in the minds of the prophets. It is I who have granted visions in abundance—who give you hint after hint through the prophets.

In<sup>4</sup> [my sanctuary at] Gilead there is a perverted religion<sup>4</sup>—mere waste of time! In the sacred Stone Circle at Gilgal they sacrifice oxen. Their altars, even theirs, shall become stone heaps in ploughed fields.<sup>5</sup>

Ephraim has bitterly provoked his master. His master will not clear him of his mortal guilt—he will pay him back for his insults.

### *Chapter xii..3b to 6, 12 and 13.*

*An editor, either misunderstanding Hosea or feeling that Jacob had been harshly dealt with, fitted into Hosea's text some passages in which Jacob appears to great advantage. This editor derives the name “Israel” (the other name for Jacob) from Yisreh—“He perseveres”—and El—“God.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Sirocco = a hot east wind.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT, “destruction.”

<sup>3</sup> Rest of verse 3 and verses 4, 5, 6, are a later insertion; see below.

<sup>4</sup> MT, “if . . . idolatry.”

<sup>5</sup> For 12 and 13 see below.

*There may perhaps be a link between the added passages in - that the verb translated "keep" in verse 6 is the same as the verb translated "kept" in verse 12 and in verse 13.*

xii. 3b to 6.

With all his energy Jacob persevered with God—persevered with an angel and prevailed. He prayed to him—prayed with tears. At Bethel he found God—yes, there God spoke with us.

And Yahweh is the God of our armies—Yahweh is his name.

You, too, by the help of your God, must return [to him].

Keep kindness and justice and wait for your God without ceasing.

xii. 12 and 13.

Jacob fled to the country of the Aramæans—yes, Israel served for a wife—for a wife he kept sheep.

By a prophet Yahweh brought up Israel out of Egypt—yes, by a prophet was Israel kept.

### *Chapter xiii.*

*Ephraim has made "the great refusal" to face the living God and to "walk" (i.e. "make progress") with the living God. To Hosea idolatry is perverted religion; cf. 1 John v. (20 and 21). Idolatry implies that God is regarded as an It rather than as a He, or as less alive in the present than in the past.*

*The popular idol in the days of Hosea was a golden bull. But according to the principle proclaimed by Hosea, a book, a creed, an "infallible Church," a "life force," "natural law," or a philosophical Absolute, are equally idols or dead gods if they are regarded as substitutes for the living God.*

Once, whenever Ephraim spoke, men trembled. He was prince<sup>1</sup> in Israel. But he incurred guilt [by confounding me] with the Baalim—and lies dead.

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<sup>1</sup> MT, "lifted up."

Even now the Israelites continue in their error. They have made themselves molten images out of their own silver—idols to suit their own ideas [of me]! Smith's work is it all! Such things they call God<sup>1</sup>!

Men, when they sacrifice, kiss miserable bulls! Therefore they are like a morning mist—like dew that passes early away—like chaff that is swept away by the gale from the threshing floor—like smoke that goes out through the window.

Yet I, Yahweh, have been your God since you left Egypt. You have no experience of any God but me. No other has ever been your saviour. It was I who was your<sup>2</sup> shepherd in the wilderness, in the dreadful land of drought.

But the better their pasturage, the more the Israelites gorged themselves. They gorged themselves and became arrogant. That is why they have forgotten me.

So I must prey upon them like a lion. Like a panther must I lurk beside their path. I must fall on them like a bear bereaved of her whelps, break their chests, and devour them on the spot like a lion—yes, wild animals shall tear them to pieces. Since<sup>3</sup> I am your destroyer, O Israel, who<sup>4</sup> is there to help you? Where now is your king? Let him save you! Where are all<sup>5</sup> your nobles? Let them right you!<sup>5</sup> Yes, where are all those of whom you said—"Give me a king and nobles"? I gave you kings in my anger and deposed them in my fury.

Ephraim's iniquity is repressed. His error is hidden [from his consciousness]. It is time for him to be born [to a bigger life]. He is a laggard child. He refuses to face the new birth.

Can I rescue them from Sheol? Can I redeem them from death! Come, Death, with your plagues! Come, Sheol, with your destruction! I must banish compassion from my mind!

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<sup>1</sup> M'T, "to them."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; M'T, "I knew thee."

<sup>3</sup> M'T, "he."

<sup>4</sup> M'T, "in me."

<sup>5-5</sup> M'T, "in all your cities, and your judges."

Although Ephraim—the fruitful one—be more fruitful than all his brothers, there will come a sirocco [from Assyria], Yahweh's wind, rising from the wilderness. Ephraim's fountains will fail, his springs will run dry. [The Assyrian] will plunder the treasury of all its precious jewels.

Samaria must bear her punishment, for she has rebelled against her God. Her men will be killed in action, her children dashed to pieces, her women with child ripped up.

#### *Chapter xiv. 1 to 8.*

Return,<sup>1</sup> O Israel, to Yahweh your God. For you are fallen, tripped up by the iniquity [you have not recognised]. Take with you [instead of a sacrifice] your confession and return to Yahweh. Say to him—"Take away our iniquity altogether and accept what is good [in us], that so we may render as our thank-offering the fruit<sup>2</sup> of our grateful lips. We will not look to Assyria to save us, nor trust in the chariots [of Egypt]. Never again will we call our own inventions God! For it is thou who are moved by a father's sympathy for the orphans."<sup>3</sup>

I will cure their refusal to face me. I will love them generously.

Now that the anger<sup>4</sup> which I launched against him has returned, I will be like the dew to Israel. He shall blossom like the lily, strike root [and stand firm] like the Lebanon range. His branches shall spread. He shall be like the olive-yards in beauty, like the forest of Lebanon in scent.<sup>5</sup>

What further use can Ephraim have for idols? It is I who will respond to him and take care of him. I am ever green like the cypress. It is through me that your harvest is assured.

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<sup>1</sup> The word "to repent" is in Hebrew "to return (to God)."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT, "bulls."

<sup>3</sup> Cf John xiv. 18 margin.

<sup>4</sup> See Hosea xi. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Verse 7 is an addition; see below.

*Chapter xiv. 7, a later addition ; note plural.*

Once<sup>1</sup> more shall Yahweh's protecting shadow be their home. They shall enjoy their lives like a well-watered garden.<sup>2</sup> They shall be prolific as the vine and fragrant as the wine of Lebanon.

*Chapter xiv. 9.*

*A commentary on the book by an editor who writes in the style of "Proverbs" at a date when there has been much discussion on the problem of how to reconcile the goodness of God with the pain, sorrow, and sin in the world.*

Let the wise understand this and the understanding prove it by experience. Yahweh's ways are straight and level. The loyal make progress in them, but the rebellious trip up in them.

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT, "The dwellers in his shadow shall return."

<sup>2</sup> MT, "They shall live, corn."



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## *EDITORS' PREFACE.*

SINCE the issue of our last number in this series the whole company of Old Testament students has been laid under a debt of gratitude to Dr. Moffatt for his complete translation of the Old Testament. To this we refer our readers for comparison and further enlightenment. But we feel there is still ample room for our versions.

First, there is great convenience in being able to purchase separately any book we wish to study. Secondly, the plan of our series enables us to give introductions to each book, and to provide divisions and explanatory notes to each section. Thirdly, our footnotes enable readers to see at a glance the reasons for important changes.

By the generous help of our colleagues in this enterprise we are able to present a translation that is well within the reach of everyone, and that rests upon the best results of modern scholarship. Literary elegance has been sacrificed to clearness of expression and simplicity of language.

We are grateful for the reception given to the books previously issued, and have tried to benefit by many helpful criticisms received, for which we are thankful.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed by us.

A pathetic interest now attaches to this book, for just as the final proofs were ready for his revision Dr. Skinner was very suddenly called away from his earthly work. Our thankfulness is the more intense that he was enabled to bring the translation practically to the form he desired. The editors have done the final revision with the utmost care, and have made no changes for which they did not feel that they had the distinguished author's authority. In a very few cases they have added notes which are enclosed in square brackets. The book seems to them a fitting final gift from the hand that had so enriched the interpretation of the Old Testament.

G.C.M.  
T.H.R.

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NOTE.—Throughout the footnotes, LXX denotes the Septuagint, i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made from a Hebrew text between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era; and MT the Massoretic Text, i.e., the traditional Hebrew Text.

# THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE two books of Samuel are amongst the most instructive, and certainly most interesting, of the Old Testament writings. They deal with a period of history covering about four human generations, from the birth of Samuel to the old age of David—a period crowded with stirring and memorable events in the political life of the people of Israel. They exhibit the transition from the disunion and anarchy of the age of the Judges to the comparative order and security of the early monarchy. To them we are indebted for all we know of the struggle for national independence against the Philistines, which issued in the establishment of the kingdom, first under Saul and then under David. Here also we discover, if not the beginnings, at least the emergence into clear history, of the prophetic movement which so profoundly influenced the course of Israel's religious development. It was a rude and bloody age, in which men of strong will and strong passions played their parts ; and the dramatic skill with which such men are made to reveal their characters by word and action has created a series of historical portraits unrivalled in Hebrew literature. There are brave and chivalrous figures like Saul and Jonathan, bold and unscrupulous soldiers like Joab and Abishai, sensual or ambitious princes like Amnon and Absalom, astute counsellors like Ahithophel and Hushai ; and many others ; while the higher tendencies of the age are represented in two men of genius, Samuel and David, who were gifted with true political insight to guide the destinies of the people in accordance with the purpose of God. Not the least valuable features of the narrative are the glimpses it affords of the common life of common people : their homes and livelihood, their everyday religion and ways of thinking,—often crude and primitive, and ruled by superstitious ideas and barbarous customs, but lighted up by examples of genuine piety, sustained by a living sense of fellowship with Yahweh the God of Israel, and a strong faith in an overruling divine providence.

The Book—the division into two is not original, and is not recognised in the Jewish Canon—is not the work of a single

author, but, like all the historical books of the Old Testament, a compilation from earlier written sources ; some of which (but not all) go back in their turn to oral tradition. These sources vary greatly in historical value. Some must have been written within living memory of the events recorded, and take rank among historic documents of the first order ; others are no less obviously coloured by the reflections of a later age on these events. Several good scholars believe that among the literary sources of Samuel they can recognise the continuation of the two oldest documents of the Pentateuch, as well as the work of later writers influenced by the teaching of Deuteronomy. However that may be, it is certain that no good purpose would have been served by an attempt to carry through a continuous analysis in the present translation, as is done in the translation of Genesis in this series. Only where a blending of narratives was clear (as in 1 Sam. viii.-xiv.), or seemed so to me (as in 1 Sam. xvii., xviii. and 2 Sam. i.) have I disentangled and separated the combined narratives. But since it is useful to the reader to distinguish sections of later origin, or insertions which interrupt the continuity of the main account, I have indicated such secondary passages by having them printed with an inlet in the margin, which seems a more satisfactory method than the employment of different varieties of type.

Samuel has another and less favourable distinction among Old Testament books : its text is among the worst preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Many passages are quite untranslatable ; others when translated yield no intelligible sense ; and in innumerable cases slighter adjustments and corrections of the text are called for. Hence the profusion of footnotes with which the following pages are encumbered. Fortunately, in a very considerable number of cases the difficulty is cleared up by a comparison of the ancient Greek translation known as the Septuagint, which was made from Hebrew manuscripts no longer extant, which were free from a good many of the errors that have crept into the present Hebrew text. Amid the bewildering variety of text which the MSS of the Septuagint present, it so happens that a particular group of MSS, representing what is called the Lucianic recension, has been found specially useful in restoring the original text of Samuel. This accounts for the numerous references to the Septuagint in the

Notes, where the Lucianic recension is denoted by the contraction "Luc." Other ancient versions, such as the Latin, the Syriac, the Aramaic Targums, and others, render occasional help ; although in the Notes they are mostly slumped together under an "etc." Sometimes all these external aids fail us, and we must either have recourse to conjectural emendation, or give up the attempt in despair. Readers who wish further information on these and suchlike matters will do well to consult a good modern commentary, such as that of Professor A. R. S. Kennedy in the "Century Bible."

About the translation I need only say that it is meant for a translation and not for a "crib." While avoiding mere paraphrase as much as possible, I have purposely shunned the opposite extreme of literalism, or always rendering the same Hebrew word or expression by the same English equivalent. My aim has been to present the sense of the Hebrew in such language as would naturally be used by an English writer of the present day ; although it has to be remembered that the ancient Hebrew had many things to say that a modern Englishman would never think of saying. I have thought it necessary here and there to fill in an English phrase to relieve the characteristic compression of Hebrew style : such additions, as involving no change of text, are left without any external indication.

A word must be added on the Notes. Except a very few which are merely explanatory—of names, customs, allusions, and so forth—they all refer to alterations made in the Hebrew text, whether on the authority of an ancient version or by reasonable conjecture. Where only a single word is affected, a numeral stands *after* that word ; where more than one, the numeral is repeated at the beginning and end of the alteration. The marks ° ° denote slight changes of text, to which it was thought unnecessary to append a note. Square brackets [ ] enclose short passages which, though left in the translation, are probably not original.

[Dots with a query after them denote that the existing text can neither be translated, nor amended.

Asterisks signify that the text as it stands is deficient, especially where two narratives have been combined.

Where this is more uncertain a query follows the asterisks. —ED.]

The following are the abbreviations employed :

MS(S) : Manuscript(s).

MT : Massoretic Text (the common text of Hebrew Bibles).

LXX : The Septuagint.

Luc. : The Lucianic recension of the LXX (see above).

Syr. : The Syriac Version.

J.S.



# SAMUEL.

## I. SAMUEL AND SAUL.

(1 Sam. i.-xv.)

### I. THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL (i. 1-28 ; ii. 11).

At the time when this story opens there was a man living at Ramathaim,<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>a Zuphite<sup>2</sup> from the hill country of Ephraim, Elkanah by name, a son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph—an Ephraimite. He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah ; and Peninnah had several children, but Hannah had none. This man went up from his city regularly once a year to offer worship and sacrifice to Yahweh Zebaoth at Shiloh. [There the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of Yahweh.]<sup>3</sup>

Now when the day of Elkanah's sacrifice came round, it was his custom to serve out helpings to his wife Peninnah and each of her children, while to Hannah he gave <sup>4</sup>only one helping, although<sup>4</sup> he loved Hannah best ; only Yahweh had denied her the blessing of motherhood. On these occasions her rival-wife used to exasperate her with gibes about her childless condition. "This went" on year after year—every time "they" came up to the house of Yahweh she would provoke her thus—till one day when she broke down and cried, and would eat nothing ; and Elkanah her husband, trying to cheer her, said : "Hannah, why do you weep and refuse to eat ? Why are you so sad ? Surely I am worth more to you than ten sons !" But Hannah rose up after the meal <sup>5</sup>in the guest-chamber,<sup>5</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Ramathaim (Two Heights) is the same place as Ramah (Height) ; see i. 19 ; ii. 11.

<sup>2—2</sup> The reading of LXX. MT "Zophim" gives no sense.

<sup>3</sup> This sentence seems out of place at this point, because Eli himself is the only priest with whom Elkanah's family has to do.

<sup>4—4</sup> LXX. MT *suggests* (though it cannot be rightly rendered) : "a special (or double) helping, because."

<sup>5—5</sup> Doubtful. MT has "in Shiloh," but its text is in several respects suspicious.

'presented herself before Yahweh,<sup>1</sup> while Eli the priest was sitting on his usual seat by the door-post of the temple of Yahweh. In deep distress she prayed to Yahweh, weeping all the while, and made a vow in such words as these :

"O Yahweh Zebaoth ! If thou wilt but consider the trouble of thy handmaid ; if thou wilt remember and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give her a man child—then I will dedicate him to Yahweh for as long as he lives, and no razor shall touch his head."

As she continued long in prayer to Yahweh, Eli, who was watching her mouth, concluded that she was tipsy. For Hannah was speaking to herself, only her lips kept moving, while her voice was inaudible. Eli, then, said to her, "How long is this drunken display to last ? Get rid of the wine that is in you." But Hannah answered, "You are mistaken, sir ! I am indeed an unhappy woman, but neither wine nor strong drink of any kind has passed my lips ; I have simply been unburdening my heart before Yahweh. Do not take your handmaid for a disreputable woman : it is because I am so troubled and grieved that I have spoken so long." On hearing this Eli said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of him !" To which she replied, "Think kindly of your handmaid." With that the woman went away,<sup>2</sup> and entered the guest-chamber, where she ate and drank with her husband<sup>2</sup> ; all signs of gloom having vanished from her face. Next morning they all got up early, and after an act of worship to Yahweh went home to their house at Ramah.

After this Yahweh blessed the union of Elkanah with Hannah his wife so that she became pregnant ; and about New Year time<sup>3</sup> she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel : "For," said she, "from Yahweh I 'asked' him."<sup>4</sup> And when the man Elkanah, with the rest of the family, went up to offer the annual

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A necessary addition from LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So LXX. MT has simply "and etc."

<sup>3</sup> In the autumn, coinciding with the time of the yearly sacrifice.

<sup>4</sup> As if Samuel meant "Asked of God." The name really means "Name of God." Curiously enough, the explanation given in the text would apply to the name of Saul (= "asked ") !

sacrifice to Yahweh and to fulfil his vow, Hannah did not go up, but said to her husband that she would wait till the boy was weaned ; then she would bring him to appear before Yahweh, and let him remain there always. “Do as you think best,” said her husband Elkanah, “stay till you have weaned him ; only may Yahweh <sup>1</sup>sanction your vow !”<sup>1</sup> So the woman remained at home, and nursed her son till she weaned him. Then when she had weaned him she went up with him, taking with her <sup>2</sup>a three-year-old bullock,<sup>2</sup> a bushel<sup>3</sup> of meal, and a skin-bottle of wine, and brought him into the house of Yahweh at Shiloh ° °. And when they had slaughtered the bullock <sup>4</sup>the mother came with her boy<sup>4</sup> to Eli, and said “Pardon me, sir ! but as sure as you live, sir, I am the woman who stood here beside you one day praying to Yahweh. For this boy I prayed, and Yahweh has granted the boon that I asked from him. Therefore I in return now lend him to Yahweh : all the days °of his life° he is a loan to Yahweh.” So <sup>5</sup>she left him there before Yahweh and went home to Ramah<sup>5</sup> ; and the boy ministered to Yahweh under the eye of Eli the priest.

## 2. THE SONG OF HANNAH (ii. 1-10).

*Between i. 28 and ii. 11 an editor has inserted the following hymn as a suitable expression of Hannah's feelings (5b) ; although from the poem as a whole it is plain that it must have originated in a quite different situation.*

Hannah prayed and said :

Exulteth my heart in Yahweh,  
 Elate is my horn through <sup>6</sup>my God<sup>6</sup> ;  
 Wide open my mouth 'gainst my foes ;  
 For thy help makes me glad.

---

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Syr. ; MT “confirm his word.”

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX. MT “with three bullocks.” V. 25 shows that there was only one bullock.

<sup>3</sup> An ephah, which was about the same capacity as a bushel.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> So LXX ; MT “they brought the boy.”

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So LXX, preserving the original connection of i. 28 with ii. 11a. MT reads (i. 28b) “and they worshipped Yahweh there.” (ii. 11a) “And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house.”

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> LXX.

None is holy as Yahweh, [For there is none besides thee]<sup>1</sup>  
 And none a rock like our God.  
 Speak not overmuch proudly,  
 Nor let insolence come from your mouth ;  
 For a God all-knowing is Yahweh,  
<sup>2</sup>A God by whom<sup>2</sup> deeds <sup>2</sup>are weighed.<sup>2</sup>

The bow of the heroes is broken,  
 While the falling are girded with might.  
 Gluttons take service for bread,  
 While the hungry <sup>3</sup>from labour are freed.<sup>3</sup>  
 The barren is mother of seven,  
 While she that bare many doth languish.

Yahweh can kill and make living—  
 Thrust down to Sheol and bring up ;  
 Yahweh °makes poor° and enricheth—  
 Humbleth and raiseth to honour :  
 Lifteth the poor from the dust—  
 From the dunghill raiseth the needy,  
 Giving them seats among princes  
 As heirs of a glorious throne.

Yea, to Yahweh belong earth's pillars ;  
 On them he hath founded the world.  
 The feet of his saints he guardeth,  
 But sinners perish in darkness ;  
 For no man by strength prevaieth.  
 Yahweh will shatter his foes ;  
<sup>4</sup>The Highest in heaven will break them.<sup>4</sup>

Yahweh shall judge to earth's limits—  
 Will give strength to his king,  
 And exalt his Anointed's horn.

1—<sup>1</sup> This line is metrically superfluous, and is not represented in LXX.

2—<sup>2</sup> LXX.

3—<sup>3</sup> Lit. "cease to labour" ; instead of the inelegant MT "cease : even to [the barren—she beareth seven]."

4—<sup>4</sup> MT "on them in heaven will he thunder."

### 3. SAMUEL'S BOYHOOD : THE DOOM OF ELI'S HOUSE (ii. 12-iii. 21).

Now the sons of Eli were unprincipled men who had no respect for Yahweh. The priest's customary due from the people, for example, was that when any one was offering a sacrifice, while the flesh was being boiled the priest's servant came round with a three-pronged fork in his hand : this he thrust at hap-hazard into the pot or kettle or caldron or stewing-pan, and whatever the fork brought up the priest took °for himself.° Thus was use and wont for all Israel when they came <sup>1</sup>to sacrifice to Yahweh<sup>1</sup> in Shiloh. But now the priest's servant would come, before even the fat was burned on the altar, and say to the person sacrificing, "Hand over some meat to roast for the priest ; and he will not accept cooked flesh from you : he must have it raw !" And if the man said, "By all means, let the fat first be burned, and then you may take whatever you please," the fellow would answer, "No !<sup>2</sup> You must give it me now ; if not, I will take it by force." This was a very great sin in the eyes of Yahweh on the part of the young men, inasmuch as they belittled the offering of Yahweh.

Meanwhile Samuel was officiating before Yahweh as a little lad wearing a <sup>2a</sup>priestly garment made of linen.<sup>2a</sup> And his mother used to make him a little coat, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband for the annual sacrifice. Eli would then bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May Yahweh give you issue of this woman, in return for the loan which she has °lent° to Yahweh !" Then they returned to their home. °And° Yahweh had regard to Hannah : she became pregnant, and had three more<sup>3</sup> sons and two daughters, while the boy Samuel grew up as a ward of Yahweh.

When Eli, who was a very old man, heard from time to time of his sons' behaviour to all Israel, [and how they misconducted themselves with the serving-women at the door of the Tent of Meeting]<sup>4</sup> he would expostulate with them thus : "Why do

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Inserted from LXX.

<sup>2</sup> MT "to him." [The original words are very similar.—Ed.]

[<sup>2a</sup>—<sup>2a</sup> Dr. Skinner's MS had "linen ephod."—Ed.]

<sup>3</sup> LXX.

<sup>4</sup> The bracketed clause is wanting in LXX ; and certain terms used show that it does not belong to the original narrative.

you do such things as I am hearing of <sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> from all the people <sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> ? Come, come, my sons ! It is no good report that I hear the people of Yahweh spreading abroad. If a man sins against his fellow-man, God may arbitrate, but if a man sins against Yahweh, who can act as arbiter ? ” However, they paid no heed to their father’s words, for Yahweh had resolved on their death. And meanwhile the boy Samuel was growing up, and steadily gaining favour both with Yahweh and with men.

There came a man of God to Eli, and uttered the following oracle :

Thus has Yahweh spoken : Did I, or did I not, reveal myself to your father’s house when they were in Egypt, slaves<sup>1</sup> to the house of Pharaoh ? Yes ! I chose it out of all the tribes of Israel <sup>1</sup>to do priestly service<sup>1</sup> to me, to go up on my altar, to raise the sacrificial smoke, and bear an ephod before me ; and I endowed your father’s house with all the fire-offerings of the sons of Israel. Why, then, do you <sup>2</sup>look with an envious eye on my sacrifice and my offerings,<sup>2</sup> and honour your sons more than me, gorging them with the best of all that Israel offers <sup>1</sup>before me<sup>1</sup> ? Therefore (says the oracle of Yahweh, God of Israel) I *did* intend that your house and your father’s house should officiate before me for ever ; but (so *now* runs Yahweh’s oracle) Far be it from me ! For them that honour me I will honour, and those who despise me shall be disgraced. Mark ! The time is coming when I will cut off your strength<sup>3</sup> and the strength<sup>3</sup> of your father’s house <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> and there shall not be an old man in your house for all time. *One* man of yours, indeed, I will not cut off from my altar, that he may wear out his<sup>1</sup> eyesight and pine away in disappointment ; but all the manhood of your race shall die <sup>1</sup>by the sword of<sup>1</sup> men. And this which shall

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1—1 LXX.

2—2 Doubtful text : translation follows LXX.

3 Lit. “ arm ” ; LXX “ seed.”

4—4 The words omitted are unintelligible and are not represented in LXX, etc. ; they seem to me to be a corrupt duplicate of what is rendered above.

happen to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you : in one day they shall both die.—But I will raise up for me a faithful priest, who will act in accordance with my heart and mind ; I will build him a lasting house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed (king) for ever. Then it shall come to pass that any one of your house who survives will come and cringe before him for a piece of money or a loaf of bread, and will say, “ Give me a berth, please, in some priestly capacity, that I may have a bit of bread to eat.”<sup>1</sup>

Now in those days, while young Samuel was ministering to Yahweh under the eye of Eli, the word of Yahweh was scarce, prophetic visions being few and far between.

But one night—when Eli was asleep in his usual place (his eyesight was beginning to fail so that he could hardly see), and the lamp of God was still burning, and Samuel sleeping in the temple of Yahweh where the ark of God was—Yahweh called<sup>20</sup>     ° “ Samuel ! Samuel<sup>2</sup>.” He answered, “ Here, sir ! ” and running to Eli he said, “ Here I am ; you called me ! ” “ No,” said Eli, “ I did not call : lie down again.” So he went and lay down.

Again the call of Yahweh came, “ Samuel !<sup>30</sup>     ° Samuel !<sup>3</sup> ” ; and again he went to Eli and said, “ Here I am ; I heard you call ! ” He said, “ I did not call, my son ; lie down again.”

Now Samuel did not as yet know Yahweh, nor had the word of Yahweh as yet been revealed to him. So when Yahweh called Samuel the third time, he rose and went to Eli, saying as before : “ Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived

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<sup>1</sup> The passage ii. 27-36, at least in its present form, is a late composition inserted by an editor, tracing back the suppression of the priesthood of Eli's line to the guilt of his two sons. The main reference (*vv.* 31-33) is to the massacre of the priests of Nob by Saul, from which Abiathar alone (*v.* 33) escaped (1 Sam. xxii. 17ff), and of which the death of Hophni and Phinehas (ch. iv. 11) is to be the sign (*v.* 34). *V.* 35 refers to the appointment of Zadok in the reign of Solomon, and the exclusion of Abiathar from the priesthood (1 Kings ii. 27). *Vv.* 36, 37, may be a still later priestly addition referring to the degradation of the Levites in the time of Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 8, 9).

<sup>2—2</sup> So LXX ; MT “ to Samuel.”

<sup>3—3</sup> MT : “ and Samuel arose.”



that Yahweh was calling the lad ; and he said to Samuel : “ Go and lie down ; and if someone calls you, say ‘ Speak, Yahweh ! Thy servant is listening.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Then Yahweh came and stood by him, calling as on the former occasions, “ Samuel ! Samuel ! ” And Samuel said, “ Speak ! for thy servant is listening.”

This is what Yahweh said to Samuel : “ Attend ! I am about to do a thing in Israel which will stun both ears of every one who hears of it. In that day I will make good against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from the first word to the last. °Tell him° that I have doomed his house for all time ° °, because though he knew that his sons were dishonouring God<sup>1</sup> he did not take them to task. Therefore I have sworn concerning the house of Eli, ‘ Not by sacrifice nor offering shall the guilt of Eli’s house be expiated for ever ! ’ ”

Samuel then lay still till the morning ; and <sup>2</sup>rising early<sup>2</sup> he threw open the doors of the house of Yahweh, but was afraid to tell the vision to Eli, till Eli called him and said : “ Samuel, my son ! ” When he answered “ Yes ! ” Eli asked : “ What is the word that was spoken to you ? hide nothing from me. Woe betide you if you conceal from me a word of all that he spoke to you ! ” Then Samuel told him the whole story, keeping back nothing from him. He said : “ He is Yahweh ! Let him do as seems to him good.”

And as Samuel grew, Yahweh was with him, and let none of all his words go unfulfilled ; and all Israel from Dan to Beersheba came to know Samuel as an accredited prophet of Yahweh. And Yahweh continued to manifest himself in Shiloh, for Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>But Eli was very old ; and his sons went from bad to worse in their evil ways before Yahweh.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT “ themselves ” (?) is one of the “ corrections of the scribes,” made from a feeling of reverence for the divine name.

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3—3</sup> MT + “ In Shiloh by the word of Yahweh ” (not in LXX).

<sup>4—4</sup> Inserted from LXX.



4. ISRAEL DEFEATED BY THE PHILISTINES ; DEATH OF ELI'S  
SONS ; CAPTURE AND RECOVERY OF THE ARK (iv. 1b-vii.1).

<sup>1</sup>About this time the Philistines called up their levies to make war on Israel.<sup>1</sup> The Israelites took the field against them, and encamped by the Stone of Help (Ebenezer), the Philistine camp being at Aphek. The Philistines offered battle to Israel ; and after a °sharp° encounter Israel was defeated with a loss of some 4,000 rank and file left dead on the field.

When the people were come back into the camp, the elders of Israel held a consultation as to the reason why Yahweh had suffered them to be beaten that day by the Philistines. Finally they decided to bring the ark of <sup>2</sup>their God<sup>2</sup> from Shiloh, believing that if it were among them it would save them from the power of their enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, and fetched thence the ark of <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> Yahweh Zebaoth, who is enthroned on the cherubim ; and in charge of the ark of <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> God were the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas.

As soon as the ark of <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> Yahweh came into the camp, all Israel raised such a shout that the welkin rang. The Philistines, hearing the noise, wondered what could be the meaning of this loud shouting in the Hebrew camp. When they learned that the ark of Yahweh had come to the camp, the Philistines were filled with consternation ; for they thought to themselves, "A god has come to the camp !" They said : "Woe to us ! The like of this has never happened before. Woe to us ! Who can deliver us from the hand of this mighty god ? This is the god who smote the Egyptians with all sorts of disasters <sup>4</sup>and with pestilence.<sup>4</sup> Pull yourselves together, Philistines, like men, else you will be slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you. Be men, and fight !" And the Philistines fought with such courage that Israel was completely routed, and fled every man to his tent ; and in the great slaughter which ensued 30,000 footmen of Israel perished. Moreover the ark of God was

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX : instead of the redundant sentence of MT : " And the word of Samuel came to all Israel."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX : MT " the covenant of Yahweh."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> (three times). MT inserts " the covenant of."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> MT " in the wilderness."

taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed.

The news was brought to Shiloh by a man of Benjamin, who ran from the ranks, and reached Shiloh the same day with his coat torn and earth on his head. When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on a seat by the <sup>1</sup>side of the gate, looking out along the road,<sup>1</sup> filled with apprehension for the ark of God. When the man carried the news into the city, a wail arose from the whole town. Eli, hearing the loud cry of distress, said <sup>2</sup>to the men standing near<sup>2</sup> : “What is the meaning of this commotion?” But the man himself came hastily to Eli, and told him. (Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were stiff so that he could not see.) The man said to Eli : “I am the one who has come from the <sup>2</sup>camp<sup>2</sup> ; I fled from the ranks this very day.” “How did things go, my son ?” said Eli ; and the messenger answered : “Israel is in flight before the Philistines ! A great defeat has been inflicted on the army : your two sons are dead <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> ; and the ark of God is taken !” At the mention of the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his seat <sup>o</sup> <sup>o</sup> by the side of the gate, and broke his neck and died ; for the man was old and heavy. [He had judged Israel for forty years.]<sup>4</sup>

And when his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, who was pregnant and near the time of her delivery, heard the tidings of the capture of the ark, and <sup>o</sup>the death of<sup>o</sup> her father-in-law and her husband, her pangs came upon her, and she sank down and was delivered. And as she lay dying, the women about her sought to cheer her by telling her that she had given birth to a son. But she made no answer, and paid no heed. Only she named the child “I-chabod,” meaning “Gone is the glory from Israel !” because of the loss of the ark of God, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, “Gone is the glory from Israel ; for the ark of God is taken !”

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX ; MT corrupt.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT adds their names.

<sup>4</sup> LXX “twenty years.” The sentence belongs to the chronological scheme of the editor, and not to the original narrative.

Meanwhile the ark of God, which had been taken by the Philistines, was brought from Ebenezer to Ashdod, and lodged in the temple of Dagon by the side of the idol. But early next morning, <sup>1</sup>when the Ashdodites entered the temple,<sup>1</sup> there was Dagon lying face downward on the ground in front of the ark of Yahweh! So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. On the following morning Dagon was again found prostrate on his face before the ark of Yahweh, but with his head and two hands broken off and lying on the threshold; nothing of Dagon was left except <sup>2</sup>the trunk.<sup>2</sup>—(This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter his temple to this day, avoid stepping on the threshold.)

The hand of Yahweh then lay heavy on the Ashdodites, and he caused a panic among them and afflicted them with plague-boils—not only in Ashdod but in the surrounding district. When the men of Ashdod saw how matters stood, they determined that the ark of the God of Israel should not remain with them, because his hand was hard on them and on Dagon their god. So they called together all the Tyrants<sup>3</sup> of the Philistines, to consider what should be done with the ark of the God of Israel. The Tyrants<sup>3</sup> suggested that it should be removed to Gath; so they sent it on <sup>1</sup>to Gath.<sup>1</sup> No sooner had they done so than the hand of Yahweh was on that city, creating a great panic, and smiting the inhabitants young and old with plague-boils which broke out on them.

Next they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when it arrived there the Ekronites cried out: “They have brought round the ark of the God of Israel to us,<sup>3</sup> to kill us<sup>3</sup> and our<sup>3</sup> people!” And they summoned all the Tyrants<sup>4</sup> of the Philistines, and said: “Send away the ark of the God of Israel; let it go back to its own place, and not bring death on us and our people.” For the whole city was seized with a deadly panic, the hand of God lying very heavily upon them. The men who did not die were smitten with plague-boils, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Inserted from LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So Luc. MT “Dagon.”

[<sup>3</sup> Dr. Skinner’s MS had “me,” “me,” “my.”—ED.]

<sup>4</sup> A foreign title (*Seren*), only used of the five leaders of the Philistines.

The ark of Yahweh was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. Then the Philistines called together the priests and soothsayers, and asked them to advise what was to be done with the ark of Yahweh, and by what means it could be sent back to its own place. They answered : “ If you mean to send away the ark of the God of Israel, you must not send it empty ; you must undoubtedly present it with an expiatory offering : then you will be healed, and it will be made clear to you why his hand does not remove from you.” When asked what sort of expiation they should make to it, the priests and soothsayers replied as follows : “ It should be, in accordance with the number of the Tyrants of the Philistines, five golden tumours and five golden mice ; for it is one calamity that affects °you° all and your Tyrants. Make, therefore, models of your tumours and of the mice that infest the land, and give honour to the God of Israel ; it may be he will relax his hand from you, your god and your land. Why should you harden your hearts, like the Egyptians and Pharaoh ? Is it not known that it was only when he had made a laughing-stock of them that they let °Israel° depart ? In the next place, you must make a new cart, and take two milch cows that have never borne a yoke, and harness them to the cart, taking their calves from them and keeping them at home. You will set the ark of Yahweh on the cart, putting the golden emblems which you present as an expiation in a box at its side ; then release it and let it go. Mark well what happens : if it goes up in the homeward direction towards Bethshemesh, it is Yahweh<sup>1</sup> who has sent this great evil upon us ; if not, we may conclude that it was not his hand that smote us, but some accident that has befallen us.”

Accordingly this was done. The men took two milch cows, yoked them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. They placed the ark of Yahweh on the cart, with the box containing the golden mice and the models of the tumours. And sure enough the cows made straight for Bethshemesh, keeping to one road, lowing as they went, but never deviating to the right or left, and followed by the Tyrants of the Philistines as far as the boundary of Bethshemesh.

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[<sup>1</sup> Dr. Skinner's MS had “ he.”—Ed.]

Now the people of Bethshemesh were busy with the wheat harvest in the plain, and when they looked up and saw the ark they ran joyfully <sup>1</sup>towards it.<sup>1</sup> The cart meanwhile had come to the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite and there it stopped : a great stone marks the spot. Then they split up the wood of the cart, and offered the two cows as a burnt-offering to Yahweh. [        ]<sup>2</sup>. Having seen this the five Tyrants of the Philistines returned to Ekron the same day. [        ]<sup>3</sup>. The great stone<sup>4</sup> on which they placed the ark of Yahweh stands to this day <sup>5</sup>as a witness<sup>5</sup> in the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite.

<sup>6</sup>But because the sons of Jechoniah did not rejoice<sup>6</sup> with the men of Bethshemesh <sup>7</sup>when they beheld the ark of Yahweh,<sup>7</sup> he struck down <sup>8</sup>seventy men<sup>8</sup> among them<sup>9</sup>. And the people mourned because Yahweh had made such a slaughter among the people. "Who can stand before Yahweh this holy God ?" cried the men of Bethshemesh, "Who will take him off our hands ?" They sent messengers to the people of Kirjath-jearim, telling them that the Philistines had sent back the ark of Yahweh, and imploring them to come down and take it away with them. So the men of Kirjath-jearim came and brought up the ark of Yahweh, and lodged it in the house of Abinadab on the hill ; consecrating his son Eleazar as its custodian.

<sup>1—1</sup> So LXX, MT "at the sight."

<sup>2</sup> The following notice stands in MT : "The Levites lifted down the ark of Yahweh (and the box that came with it containing the golden emblems) and set it on the great stone, while the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices to Yahweh that day" (v. 15). The passage obviously breaks the connection, and has been added because in later times only the Levites were allowed to handle the ark.

<sup>3</sup> The connection is again broken in MT by a belated notice : "Now these are the golden tumours which the Philistines presented to Yahweh as an expiatory offering : one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron. But the golden mice were according to the number (?) of all the Philistine cities under the five Tyrants, from fortified towns to unwallled villages" (vv. 17, 18a).

<sup>4</sup> So LXX, etc. MT has "meadow (?)."

<sup>5—5</sup> An emendation based on LXX, etc. MT is untranslatable.

<sup>6—6</sup> An addition of LXX, without which the sense is incomplete.

<sup>7—7</sup> Or, "but gazed irreverently on the ark of Yahweh."

<sup>8—8</sup> MT "5,070 men" !

<sup>9</sup> LXX.

## 5. SAMUEL AS JUDGE OF ISRAEL (vii. 2-17).

The ark remained a long time at Kirjath-jearim. It had been there twenty years when the whole nation of Israel began to seek Yahweh with mourning. Samuel said to them: "If you will sincerely return to Yahweh, put away the foreign gods that are among you [and the Astartes], and fix your minds on Yahweh to worship him alone; then he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." So the Israelites put away the Baals and the Astartes, and worshipped Yahweh alone.

Samuel then convoked an assembly of all Israel at Mizpah, that he might plead with Yahweh on their behalf. They assembled accordingly at Mizpah, where they drew water and poured it out before Yahweh, and fasted all that day, confessing ° ° their sins against Yahweh. And Samuel dispensed justice to all Israel in Mizpah.

But the Philistines were informed that the Israelites were gathered at Mizpah, and the Philistine Tyrants<sup>1</sup> took the field against Israel. When the Israelites heard of this they were overcome with fear of the Philistines, and said to Samuel: "Do not turn a deaf ear to us, nor cease calling on Yahweh our God to save us from the hand of the Philistines." Then Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a holocaust<sup>2</sup> to Yahweh, while he cried to Yahweh on behalf of Israel. And Yahweh answered him. For even as Samuel was offering the burnt-sacrifice, the Philistines advanced to give battle to Israel. But Yahweh thundered that day against the Philistines with a mighty noise, putting them in a panic, so that they gave way before Israel. Then the men of Israel, issuing from Mizpah, pursued the Philistines with great slaughter to a point below Bethcar. And Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah<sup>3</sup> and named it Ebenezer (Stone of Help), saying: "Thus far has Yahweh helped us." The Philistines were so thoroughly subdued that they never invaded Israelite territory again; and Yahweh's hand was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Thus the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored, from Ekron to Gath, as well as the districts surrounding them, which Israel freed from

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<sup>1</sup> See on v. 8, p. 19, n. 3.

[<sup>2</sup> That is, an offering of which the whole was burnt on the altar.—ED.]

<sup>3</sup> Read so with LXX, etc. (cf. 2 Chr. xiii. 19), instead of MT, "the cliff."

the dominion of the Philistines. There was peace also between Isrā'el and the Amorites.

Samuel judged Israel as long as he lived. He went on circuit year by year, visiting Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah, and administering justice at all these sanctuaries. But he always finished his circuit at Ramah, where his house was ; there he dispensed justice to Israel, and there he built an altar to Yahweh.

## 6. THE ELECTION OF SAUL AS KING OF ISRAEL : THE WAR OF LIBERATION AGAINST THE PHILISTINES (viii.-xiv.).

*The institution of the monarchy in Israel is the subject of two distinct and easily separable narratives in the first book of Samuel. The first (A) is contained in ix. 1-x.16; xi.; xiii. 1-7a, 15b-23; xiv. The second (B) is the continuation of ch. vii., and is found in viii.; x. 17-24; xii. It gives no account of the war of liberation, because it has already stated (vii. 13) that the Philistines did not again invade Israel during Samuel's lifetime.—We begin with the older and historically more valuable account of A.*

### A. THE FIRST ACCOUNT (ix. 1-x. 16; xi.; xiii. 1-7a, 15b-23; xiv.).

#### (I) *The Secret Anointing of Saul by Samuel* (ix. 1-x. 16).

There was in those days a well-to-do yeoman of <sup>1</sup>Gibeah in Benjamin, whose name was Kish, a son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin. This man had a son named Saul, a strikingly handsome young man ; there was not a better looking man in Israel than he, standing as he did head and shoulders taller than all the rest of the people.

It happened one day that some she-asses belonging to Kish, Saul's father, went astray, and he bade his son Saul take one of the servants and go in search of the asses. So the two searched through the hill country of Ephraim, and through the district of Shalisha, without finding them ; then through the region of Shaalbim,<sup>2</sup> still to no purpose ; and then through the territory

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Accidentally omitted in MT and Versions.

<sup>2</sup> MT "Shaalim"—unknown.



of Benjamin ; but nowhere could they find any trace of the asses. At last, when they came to the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who accompanied him :

“ We had better go back, or my father will be more concerned about us than about the asses.”

“ Stay ! ” said the servant : “ In the city over there, there is a man of God, a man of great repute, whose every word comes true. Let us go there, and perhaps he will direct us in the journey on which we have started.”

“ Well ! ” said Saul, “ but suppose we went, what could we offer the man ? The bread in our wallets is all done, and there is nothing we could bring to the man of God as a gratuity. What have we ? ”

“ That’s all right ! ” he answered. “ Here is a silver groat<sup>1</sup> which I happen to have on me ; °give° that to the man of God, and he will show us our way.”

“ Very good ! ” said Saul. “ Come along ! We will go.” [     ]<sup>2</sup>

So they went towards the city where the man of God dwelt. And as they were going up the ascent that led to the city they met some girls coming out to draw water, and asked them if the seer was at home. The girls replied :

“ Yes, he is ! The seer <sup>3</sup>has gone on before you. He has just this moment<sup>3</sup> entered the city, for the people have a sacrifice to-day at the high-place. As you go in to the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high-place to dine. The people, you know, will not eat till he comes, because it is he who blesses the sacrifice, and after that the guests fall to. But go up at once ; °now° is the very time to find him.”

They went up to the city ; and just as they passed through the gateway Samuel was coming out in the opposite direction, to go up to the high-place. Now, the day before Saul arrived, Yahweh had disclosed his will to Samuel in the following

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<sup>1</sup>  $\frac{1}{4}$  shekel, at the present value of sterling worth about 7d.

<sup>2</sup> The omitted verse is a misplaced explanatory gloss on the word “seer,” which first occurs a couple of verses later. It reads : “ In former time in Israel, when any one went to consult the deity, he would say, ‘ Come, let us go to the Seer.’ For he who now-a-days is called a Prophet, used formerly to be called a Seer.”

3—3 Following I.XX.



oracle : “ To-morrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin ; him you will anoint to be prince over my people Israel ; and he shall deliver my people from the might of the Philistines. For I have seen <sup>1</sup>‘the misery of’ my people, whose cry has reached me.” As soon, then, as Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh prompted him, saying, “ This is the man of whom I said to you that he should govern my people.”

At this point Saul came up to Samuel in the gateway and said : “ Tell me, pray, which is the seer’s house.” Samuel answered : “ I am the seer ! Go on in front of me up to the high-place, and you shall both dine with me to-day ; and to-morrow morning, before I let you go, I will tell you all that is in your mind. As for the asses that were lost to you three days ago, you need not trouble yourself about them ; they have been found. And to whom belongs all that is most precious in Israel, if not to you and all your father’s house ? ” Saul answered : “ I am but a man of Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes of Israel ; and my clan is the least influential of all the clans of Benjamin ; why should you thus address me ? ”

When they reached the high-place, Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and gave them a place at the head of the guests, who numbered about thirty men. Then he called to the cook, “ Serve up the joint I gave you—the one I told you to set apart.” So the cook took up the shoulder <sup>2</sup>and the fat tail,<sup>2</sup> and set them before Saul ; And Samuel said : “ See ! <sup>3</sup>What is set before you is a specially reserved portion. Eat ! for it is to a feast in your honour that I have invited the people.”<sup>3</sup> So Saul dined with Samuel that day. Then they came down from the high-place to the city, <sup>4</sup>where a bed was made ready for Saul<sup>4</sup> on the roof, and he <sup>5</sup>retired to rest.<sup>5</sup>

At daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof : “ Rise up, and I will see you on your way.” So Saul got up, and he and Samuel went out into the street together. And as they were

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Added with LXX, etc.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> A probable emendation.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> A bold guess at the meaning of an impossible text !

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> LXX ; MT “ and he talked with Saul.”

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> LXX.

going down, at the lower end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Bid the servant walk on before us ° ° ; but you stand here a moment while I make known to you a word of God." Samuel then took out a vial of oil, which he poured on Saul's head, and kissing him said : " This means <sup>1</sup>that Yahweh anoints you prince over his people Israel : it is you who shall govern Yahweh's people, and you who shall deliver them from the hand of all their foes. And these are the signs by which you shall know <sup>1</sup>that Yahweh has thus anointed you to be prince over his heritage : When you part from me to-day you will meet two men near Rachel's grave in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzach ; they will tell you that the asses you set out to seek have been found, and that your father has lost all interest in the affair of the asses in his anxiety for you, and cries, ' What shall I do for my son ? ' Passing on from there, you will come to the oak of Tabor, where there will meet you three men going up to God at Bethel, the first carrying three kids, the second three loaves of bread, and the third a skin of wine : they will salute you and offer you two loaves, which you will accept at their hands. After that you will come to Gibeah, °the Hill° of God, where the Philistine commandant dwells ; and as you enter the city there you will encounter a band of dervish-prophets marching down from the high-place, to the music of harp, tambourine, flute and lyre, and they themselves raving in prophetic frenzy ; the spirit of Yahweh will come upon you, and you will rave like a prophet among them, and be changed into a new man. And when these signs have come to pass, you must act as occasion may serve ; for God is with you." [            ].<sup>2</sup>

And as Saul turned his back to leave Samuel, God wrought a change of heart in him ; and all these signs came true that day. <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup>. Going on °thence° to Gibeah, they were met

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A long omission in MT, due to the eye of a scribe having slipped from the first to the second occurrence of the same expression. The LXX preserves the original connection.

<sup>2</sup> " And go down to Gilgal before me ; I will follow you to offer burnt-offerings and peace offerings. Seven days you must wait till I come and tell you what to do." The verse anticipates xiii. 7b-15a, both being late additions to the narrative (see pp. 41, 42).

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> The fulfilment of the first two signs is omitted, perhaps accidentally.

by a band of prophets, and the spirit of God came on Saul so that he raved among them. When those who had known him of old saw him raving among the prophets they were amazed, and the people said to one another: "What can have come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" But one of the neighbours answered: "And who then is *their* father?" Hence arose the common saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

When Saul's ecstasy was over and he had gone into the house,<sup>1</sup> his uncle asked him and his servant where they had gone. "To look for the asses," said Saul; "and when we saw that it was no use we came to Samuel." "And what said Samuel to you?" asked the uncle; "tell me that." "Why, he told us that the asses were found." But as to the matter of the kingship Saul maintained a discreet silence. <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup>

(2) *Saul's Victory over the Ammonites: his Election as King*  
(x. 27b-xi. 15).

<sup>3</sup>It was about a month after this<sup>3</sup> that Nahash the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh in Gilead. The citizens of Jabesh offered to become subject to Nahash, provided he made a binding treaty with them. To this Nahash replied, "On one condition I will make <sup>3a</sup>a treaty<sup>3</sup> with you: that every man of you has his right eye put out. I will make this a disgrace to all Israel." The elders of Jabesh then asked for a seven days' armistice, while they sent messengers through the length and breadth of Israel; promising Nahash that if no succour came to them they would surrender to him.

When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and laid their story before the people, the whole community broke into loud weeping. Just then Saul came in from the fields driving his oxen before him, and inquired what was the matter with the people that they were weeping so. They told him the message from the men of Jabesh. When Saul heard these tidings the Spirit of God came upon him; and in a blaze of indignation he took a pair of oxen, dismembered them, and sent them by couriers throughout all Israel, with the proclamation: "He who does

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<sup>1</sup> MT "high-place"—wrongly.

<sup>2—2</sup> MT "what Samuel had said," omitted with LXX.

<sup>3—3</sup> LXX and Versions.

not come out after Saul <sup>1</sup> —this is what shall be done to his cattle ! ” The terror of Yahweh fell on the people, and they came out as one man ; and when Saul mustered them in Bezek they numbered 300,000 Israelites and 30,000 Judeans.

Then °he° said to the messengers who had come from Jabesh, “ Carry this answer to the men of Jabesh in Gilead : ‘ To-morrow by the time the sun is hot, deliverance will come to you.’ ” When the messengers returned with this report to the people of Jabesh they were glad, and sent word to the Ammonites that they would surrender on the morrow. “ Then,” they said, “ you may do to us whatever you please.”

Accordingly, on the following morning Saul divided his force into three companies ; and they stormed the camp in the morning watch. And the slaughter of the Ammonites went on until the heat of the day, and the survivors were dispersed so that no two of them were left together anywhere.

[And the people said to Samuel, “ Where are the men who say, ‘ Shall Saul reign over us ? ’ Hand over the men that we may put them to death.” But Saul (? Samuel) said : “ No man shall be put to death this day ; for to-day Yahweh has worked deliverance in Israel.” And Samuel said to the people, “ Come ! Let us go to Gilgal, and there renew the kingdom.”]<sup>2</sup>

The whole people then went to Gilgal ; and there, in Gilgal, they crowned Saul as king before Yahweh, and sacrificed peace-offerings before Yahweh. It was a joyous occasion to Saul and to all the men of Israel.

### (3) *The Outbreak of War with the Philistines* (xiii. 2-7a, 15b-23).

<sup>3</sup> Saul picked out 3,000 men of Israel : of these 2,000 were with Saul himself in Michmash and the hill of Bethel, and 1,000 with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin ; the rest of the people he had dismissed to their homes. Jonathan now

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> MT “ and after Samuel ”—probably an error.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. x. 27a. There is no room for such an incident in either (A or B) account of Saul’s election, unless we suppose that B originally had a notice of some signal deliverance similar to that of ch. vii. More probably the verses were inserted by a scribe to harmonise the two narratives.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> xiii. 1 should be omitted with LXX. MT reads : “ Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel.”

slew the Philistine commandant who resided in Gibeah<sup>1</sup>; and the report reached the Philistines <sup>2</sup>that the Hebrews had revolted.<sup>3</sup> Saul meanwhile had sent a trumpet-call through the whole land<sup>2</sup>; all Israel had heard that Saul had slain the Philistine officer, and Israel was in bad odour with the Philistines; and the people were called out to follow Saul <sup>4</sup>.<sup>4</sup> The Philistines, too, had already mobilised for war with Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and common soldiers innumerable as the sand on the sea-shore; and they came up and encamped at Michmash to the east of Bethaven. The Israelites now saw that they were in a desperate plight—for the people were oppressed—and hid themselves in caves and dens, in rock-crevices, in tombs<sup>5</sup> and cisterns; while <sup>6</sup>a great number<sup>6</sup> crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. <sup>7</sup> <sup>7</sup>. <sup>8</sup>The rest of the people followed Saul<sup>8</sup> to Geba<sup>9</sup> of Benjamin, where Saul mustered the force at his disposal, numbering about 600 men.

Saul and his son Jonathan and the people that were with them were now lying in Geba of Benjamin, while the Philistines were encamped in Michmash. But the raiders had been sent out from the Philistine camp in three columns; of which one took the direction of Ophrah to the district of Shual, another toward Beth-horon, and the third the direction of the °hill° overlooking the ravine of the Hyænas towards the desert.<sup>10</sup>. At the

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<sup>1</sup> So LXX, etc.; MT "Geba"; but see x. 5.

<sup>2—2</sup> Transposing clauses.

<sup>3</sup> LXX; MT "heard."

<sup>4—4</sup> ? MT "to Gilgal."

<sup>5</sup> Or "cellars."

<sup>6—6</sup> MT "Hebrews"—corrupt.

<sup>7—7</sup> For *Vv.* 7b-15a; see pp. 41-42.

<sup>8—8</sup> Following LXX in part.

<sup>9</sup> MT "Gibeah."

<sup>10</sup> *Vv.* 19-22 are very corrupt and form no part of the original text. They read somewhat as follows: "Now no blacksmith was to be found in all the land of Israel; for the Philistines feared that the Hebrews might make themselves swords and spears. So all Israel had to go down to the Philistines to get a plough-share or hoe or axe or ox-goad sharpened. . . . Thus it came about that on the day of the battle of Michmash neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of the people with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and Jonathan possessed such weapons."

same time an outpost of the Philistines was pushed forward to the Pass of Michmash.

(4) *Jonathan's Brilliant Exploit* (xiv. 1-15).

One day Jonathan, Saul's son, without letting his father know, proposed to the lad who carried his weapons that they should cross over to the outpost of the Philistines on the opposite side. Saul in fact was then at the further end of Geba,<sup>1</sup> under the pomegranate tree that grows by <sup>2</sup>the threshing-floor.<sup>2</sup> The people with him numbered about 600 men; Ahijah the son of Ahitub, the brother of Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli the priest of Yahweh at Shiloh, being there in charge of an ephod. None of the people were aware that Jonathan had gone.

Now between the passes through which Jonathan meant to cross over to the Philistine outpost, there are two steep cliffs, one on either side; one is called Bozez and the other Seneh. One cliff is ° ° on the north side in front of Michmash, the other on the south side in front of Geba.

Jonathan then said to his armour-bearer, "Let us cross over to the outpost of these uncircumcised dogs; it may be that Yahweh will do something for us; for there is no limit to Yahweh's power to save, whether by many or by few." "Do whatever you have a mind to," answered the lad, "I am your man! °My mind° is the same as yours." "Listen, then!" said Jonathan, "As we are crossing over to these men, we must show ourselves; if they say to us, 'Stand still till we reach you,' we will stop where we are, and not go up to them; but if they say, 'Come up to us,' then up we will go; for Yahweh will have delivered them into our hand. This shall be the sign for us." So when the two showed themselves to the Philistines of the outpost, they said, "Ha! Here are some Hebrews creeping out of the holes in which they have hidden themselves." Then the men of the post called out to Jonathan and his armour-bearer, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing or two!" "Up after me!" said Jonathan to his armour-bearer; "Yahweh

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<sup>1</sup> MT "Gibeah."

<sup>2-2</sup> ? MT "Migron."

has delivered them into the hand of Israel," So Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees, the armour-bearer following him; and °the Philistines° took to flight before Jonathan, 'who cut them down,<sup>1</sup> while the armour-bearer came behind him despatching the wounded.

This first exploit by Jonathan and his armour-bearer resulted in the slaughter of about twenty men<sup>2</sup> \* \* \*<sup>2</sup>. Then a tremor of fear fell on the camp,<sup>3</sup> °and° on the men in the field<sup>3</sup>; ° ° all the army, the outpost as well as the raiding column, were terror-stricken also; and to crown all there was an earthquake, which brought upon all an unearthly panic.

(5) *The Philistine Debacle* (xiv. 16-23a).

Now Saul's watchmen at Geba<sup>4</sup> in Benjamin, looking across the valley, saw the <sup>3</sup>men in the camp<sup>3</sup> rushing about <sup>3</sup>in all directions<sup>3</sup>; and Saul gave orders to the people that were with him to hold a roll-call, and see which of them was missing. When this was done it was found that Jonathan and his armour-bearer had gone away. Saul then said to Ahijah—<sup>5</sup>it was he who at this time carried the ephod before<sup>5</sup> Israel—"Bring <sup>6</sup>the ephod<sup>6</sup> here." But even as Saul spoke to the priest the noise in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder; and Saul bade the priest withdraw his hand. Saul then called out his men; and when they entered the camp,<sup>7</sup> they found every man with his sword drawn against his neighbour, in the utmost confusion. Those Hebrews, moreover, °who° for some time back had sided with the Philistines °and° had come up with them to the camp—they too deserted<sup>8</sup> to join the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan. And all the Israelites who were hiding in the hill-country of Ephraim, when they heard that the

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX addition.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> An unintelligible clause.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> LXX.

<sup>4</sup> MT "Gibeah."

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So LXX.

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> So LXX; MT "the ark of God." See p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> MT "battle."

<sup>8</sup> LXX and Syr.



Philistines were in flight, came likewise and hung on their rear fighting. Thus did Yahweh give victory to Israel that day.

(6) *Incidents of the Pursuit* (xiv. 23b-35).

The battle had now passed beyond Beth-horon<sup>1</sup>; <sup>2</sup>the whole nation was with Saul, about 10,000 men, and the fighting was general all over the hill-country of Ephraim. But Saul committed a grave indiscretion<sup>2</sup> that day, in °imposing° the following oath on the people: "Cursed be the man who takes food till evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people had tasted food. <sup>3</sup>Now there was honey-comb<sup>3</sup> on the open field; and when the people came to it they found that <sup>4</sup>the honey was flowing from it<sup>4</sup>; yet no man put his hand to his mouth, because the people feared the oath. But Jonathan, who had not heard when his father imposed the oath on the people, put out the staff he had in his hand, dipped the end of it in the honey-comb, and brought his hand to his mouth; and immediately his <sup>5</sup>spirits revived.<sup>5</sup> Then one of the people spoke up and said: "Your father took an oath of the people in these terms: 'Cursed be the man who tastes food this day.' " Jonathan answered, "My father's act is disastrous to the country! Why, look how my <sup>5</sup>spirit revived<sup>5</sup> when I tasted this little drop of honey! How much more, then, if the people had but eaten to-day from the spoil of their enemies!—but <sup>6</sup>now the slaughter among the Philistines is of no great account.<sup>6</sup>"

They fought the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people were quite exhausted. In their hunger they <sup>7</sup>threw themselves<sup>7</sup> on the spoil; and seizing sheep and oxen and calves, they slew them on the ground, and ate the flesh with the blood. But when it was reported to Saul that the

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<sup>1</sup> So Luc., etc.; MT "Bethaven."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Inserted from LXX.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> So MT, slightly altered. But LXX<sup>1</sup> suggests "its bees had left it," which may be right.

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> Lit. "eyes brightened."

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> So MT; LXX omits "not," rendering "in that case the slaughter among the Philistines would have been much greater."

<sup>7</sup>—<sup>7</sup> So Luc. and Versions.



people were sinning against Yahweh by eating with the blood, he said, "You transgress! Roll me a great stone hither<sup>1</sup>." Then he gave the order, "Go about among the people, and make them bring every one his ox or sheep to me, and slay it here, and eat, that they may not sin against Yahweh by eating with the blood." So every one brought <sup>2</sup>what he had<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>to Yahweh,<sup>3</sup> and slaughtered it there. Thus Saul set up an altar to Yahweh; it was the first of the altars which he erected to Yahweh.

(7) *The Pursuit arrested in consequence of Saul's Rash Oath* (xiv. 36-46, 52).

Saul then said: "Let us follow down after the Philistines by night, and harry them till daybreak; and not leave a man of them alive!" When the people consented, <sup>4</sup>he said to the priest,<sup>4</sup> "Let us draw near here to God." So Saul inquired of God: "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?" but no answer was made that day. He then said, "Draw near hither, all you who are leaders of the people, and inquire and see <sup>o</sup>by whom<sup>o</sup> this sin has been committed to-day. For, by the life of Yahweh, the deliverer of Israel, were it by my son Jonathan he should assuredly die." And none of all the people answered him. Then addressing all Israel he said: "You shall be one party, and I and Jonathan my son the other." The people signified their assent. Saul, then, speaking to Yahweh, said, "O God of Israel! <sup>5</sup>Why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If on me or my son Jonathan this guilt lies, O Yahweh, God of Israel, then give Urim; but if on thy people Israel, then<sup>5</sup> give Thummim." The lot fell on Jonathan and Saul, and the people were acquitted. "Now cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan," said Saul. <sup>6</sup>This was done<sup>6</sup> and Jonathan

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<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "to-day."

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX; MT "his ox in his hand."

<sup>3—3</sup> Conjectured for MT "that night"; LXX omits.

<sup>4—4</sup> MT "the priest said."

<sup>5—5</sup> LXX, etc., supply the long omission in MT, caused by the recurrence of the word "Israel" before and at the end of the omitted passage.

<sup>6—6</sup> Here again LXX has a lengthy addition, but its originality is not so obvious.

was taken. "Tell me what you have done," said Saul to Jonathan; and Jonathan told him; "It is true I tasted a little honey on the top of the staff in my hand. Here I am! I am ready to die." Saul said, "God help me, Jonathan, but die you must!" But here the people interposed and said to Saul, "What? Jonathan die! He who has achieved this great victory in Israel? God forbid! By the life of Yahweh, not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground; for he has wrought with God this day." So the people ransomed Jonathan, and he had not to die. But Saul drew off from the pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines retired to their own country.

The war with the Philistines, however, continued acute all the days of Saul. And whenever Saul saw a brave and warlike man, he took him into his service.

(8) *A List of Saul's Wars, and his Family Connections* (xiv. 47-51)<sup>1</sup>.

When Saul obtained the kingdom over Israel he waged war on all sides against his enemies—against Moab, and the Ammonites, and Edom; against the kings of Zobah and against the Philistines; and wherever he turned his arms he <sup>2</sup>was successful.<sup>2</sup> He acted valiantly, and crushed Amalek, and delivered Israel from the hands of its spoilers.

The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishjo,<sup>3</sup> and Malkishua; the names of his two daughters were Merab, the elder, and Michal, the younger. His wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of his commander-in-chief was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. Both Kish, Saul's father, and Ner, the father of Abner, were sons of Abiel.

B. SAUL'S ELECTION: SECOND ACCOUNT (viii.; x. 17-24; xii.; x. 25-27a).

(1) *The Israelites demand a King* (viii.).

Now when Samuel grew old he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. His first-born was named Joel, and his second

<sup>1</sup> Vv. 47-51 were inserted here by an editor, breaking the connection between v. 46 and v. 52.

<sup>2—2</sup> So LXX; MT would mean "he was worsted."

<sup>3</sup> That is: "Man of Yahweh"; originally perhaps "Eshbaal" (man of Baal); see 2 Sam. ii. 8, etc. MT reads here "Ishvi."

Abijah ; these acted as judges in Beer-sheba. His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but looked after their own interest, accepting bribes and perverting justice. Then all the elders of Israel met together, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him : “ You are now old, and your sons do not walk in your ways ; we would therefore have you now to set us up a king to judge us, like all other nations.” This request for a king to judge them was very displeasing to Samuel ; but when he prayed to Yahweh about it, Yahweh answered : “ Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you ; for it is not you that they reject, but me, by refusing to have me as king over them. It is in keeping with their whole behaviour from the time when I brought them up from Egypt to this day—their forsaking me and worshipping other gods—that they now treat you thus. Comply, therefore, with their wish ; only warn them well, and show them the kind of government that will be exercised by the king who shall rule over them.”

These words of Yahweh Samuel reported to the people who were asking for a king, and continued : “ This will be the way in which the king will rule over you : Your sons he will take as his charioteers and horsemen, and as runners before his chariot ; he will make them officers of regiments and companies ; he will set them to plough his fields, reap his harvest, and make his weapons and chariot-gear. Your daughters he will take into his service as perfumers, cooks and bakers. The best of your fields and vineyards he will confiscate, and bestow on his courtiers. On your arable land and vineyards he will levy a tithe, and give it to his eunuchs and retainers ; your slaves, male and female, the best of your cattle<sup>1</sup> and asses he will take and use for his husbandry ; of your flocks he will take a tithe ; you will be completely enslaved by him. The day will come when you will complain of the king you have chosen ; but in that day Yahweh will not answer you.”

But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. “ No ! ” they said, “ we must have a king over us. We would be like all other nations, having our own king to judge us, and be our leader, and fight our battles.” So Samuel, having heard all that the people had to say, reported it to Yahweh. Yahweh

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<sup>1</sup> LXX.

answered, " Give them their desire ; appoint a king over them." Samuel then bade the men of Israel go home, each one to his city.

(2) *Saul elected King by Lot* (x. 17-24).

In due time Samuel summoned the people before Yahweh to Mizpah, and addressed them as follows :

" Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel from Egypt and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and of all the kings<sup>1</sup> that oppressed you.' But you have this day rejected your God who was a saviour to you in all your distresses and dangers ; You have said, ' No !<sup>2</sup> but you must set a king over us.' Very well ! Present yourselves now before Yahweh, by your tribes and by your townships."

So Samuel marshalled all the tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then he marshalled the tribe of Benjamin clan by clan, and the clan of Matri was chosen. <sup>3</sup>Then he marshalled the clan of Matri man by man<sup>3</sup> ; and Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him he was not to be found ; and they again consulted the oracle of Yahweh : " Has the man come here at all ? " The answer was " Yes, he is hiding himself among the baggage." So they ran and dragged him forth ; and as he stepped forward in the midst of the people he towered above them all from his shoulders upwards. And Samuel said to all the people : " You see the man whom Yahweh has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people ! " And all the people shouted : " Long live the king ! "

(3) *Samuel's Valedictory Address* (xii. ; x. 25-27a).

Samuel then addressed all Israel as follows :

" I have now, as you see, fully complied with your request by setting a king over you. Henceforth, therefore, you have the king to look to. And I am now old and gray-headed, with sons among you ; and I have lived my life openly before you from my youth to this day. Here I stand ! Bear witness against me before Yahweh and his anointed 'king.' Is there

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<sup>1</sup> MT " kingdoms."

<sup>2</sup> So LXX and Versions.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> To be inserted with LXX.

any-one whose ox or ass I have taken ? Any whom I have defrauded or oppressed ? any from whom I have accepted a bribe <sup>1</sup>to wink at wrong ? Testify against me,<sup>1</sup> and I will make amends to you." They answered : " You have neither defrauded nor oppressed us, nor have you received anything from any man's hand." He said to them : " Then Yahweh is witness, and his anointed king is witness, against you this day, that you have found nothing amiss in my conduct ? " And °they ° answered, " That is so." And Samuel repeated before all the people : " Yahweh <sup>2</sup>is witness,<sup>2</sup> who raised up Moses and Aaron, and brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt."

" And now stand still, while I reason with you in Yahweh's presence, <sup>2</sup>and rehearse to you<sup>2</sup> all the righteous dealings of Yahweh with you and your fathers. When Jacob <sup>2</sup>and his sons<sup>2</sup> came to Egypt, <sup>2</sup>and the Egyptians afflicted them,<sup>2</sup> your fathers cried to Yahweh, and he sent Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt, and °he° established them in this place. But they forgot Yahweh, their God, and he gave them over into the hand of Sisera the general of <sup>2</sup>king Jabin of<sup>2</sup> Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and of the king of Moab, who made war upon them. When they cried to Yahweh and said : ' We have sinned in forsaking Yahweh and worshipping the Baals and Astartes ; but now do thou deliver us from our foes and we will serve thee '—then Yahweh sent men like Jerubbaal, Barak,<sup>3</sup> Jephthah and Samuel,<sup>4</sup> and he delivered you from the hand of your enemies around you, so that you dwelt in security. But when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites threatened you, you said to me : ' This cannot go on ; we must have a king to reign over us ; ' although Yahweh your God is your king. And now you see the king whom you have chosen <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> : Yahweh has set a king over you. If you will fear Yahweh, and serve him, obeying his voice and not rebelling against him, if you and your king who reigns over you will follow after Yahweh your God, °it will be well with you.° But if you

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX reads : " even as much as a pair of sandals ? Testify against me." I retain the last three words, although they are not in MT.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So LXX.

<sup>3</sup> So LXX, Syr. ; MT " Bedan " !

<sup>4</sup> Luc. and Syr. read " Samson."

do not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rebel against him, then Yahweh's hand will be against you 'to destroy you and your king.<sup>1</sup>

"Now stand still, and see the great thing that Yahweh is about to do before your eyes. It is now wheat-harvest, is it not? Well! I will call on Yahweh to send thunder and rain; then you will know and understand how great in the sight of Yahweh is the evil you have done in asking for a king." So Samuel called on Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunder and rain that day; and the people were seized with a great fear of Yahweh and of Samuel, and said to Samuel: "Pray to Yahweh your God for us, your servants, lest we die, because to all our other sins we have added this wickedness of asking for a king." But Samuel reassured the people and said: "You need not fear. You have indeed done all this evil; only do not turn aside from following Yahweh, but serve him with undivided allegiance. Do not turn away after unreal gods, who are good for nothing and cannot save you, because they are unrealities. For Yahweh will not cast off his people for his great name's sake; seeing it has been his good pleasure to make you his people. As for me, God forbid that I should sin against Yahweh by ceasing to pray for you, and to instruct you in the good and straight way. Only fear Yahweh, and serve him loyally with all your heart, considering how great a thing he has done among you. On the other hand, if you do evil, both you and your king shall perish."

Samuel then recited to the people the constitution of the kingdom, which he wrote in a book and deposited before Yahweh. Having done this he dismissed the people to their several homes. Saul likewise went home to Gibeah, and with him went the valiant °men° whose heart God had touched. But certain churlish fellows said: "How should this man deliver us?" and they showed their contempt for him by bringing him no present.

## 7. THE BREACH BETWEEN SAMUEL AND SAUL AT GILGAL.

*Two versions of this incident have been preserved: one in ch. xv. (an independent narrative), and the other in xiii. 7b-15a, closely and cleverly dovetailed into the older story*

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "and your fathers."

*-of Saul's kingship (A) (see x. 8). Of these the first connects it with Saul's failure to execute the ban on the Amalekites, and is obviously the earlier of the two. The second, which traces it to an act of disobedience on the part of Saul, is of later origin, although it must have been incorporated in A before the amalgamation of A and B.*

(1) *Saul commanded to exterminate the Amalekites (xv.).*

Samuel said to Saul one day: "It was I whom Yahweh commissioned to anoint you king over his people Israel; now, therefore, listen to the voice of ° ° Yahweh. Thus has Yahweh Zebaoth spoken! 'I am resolved to punish the Amalekites for their conduct towards Israel, inasmuch as they resisted its advance when it came up from Egypt.' Go, therefore and smite the Amalekites, and put the ban on °them and° all that they possess, sparing none, but slaying man and woman, infant and suckling, sheep and ox, camel and ass."

So Saul called up the people, and mustered them in Telam<sup>1</sup> [200,000 footmen and 10,000 horsemen<sup>2</sup>], and came to the chief city of the Amalekites. There he set an ambush in the water-course, while he sent a message to the Kenites to clear out from among the Amalekites: "else," he said, "I may exterminate you along with them; although you showed friendship to ° ° the Israelites when they came up from Egypt." The Kenites accordingly withdrew from among the Amalekites, whom Saul then routed from Telam<sup>3</sup> all the way to Shur, which lies to the east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of Amalek alive, but all the people he put to the ban with the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fatlings and calves, and everything of value, being unwilling to destroy them; but all worthless and useless stuff they put to the ban.

Thereupon the word of Yahweh came to Samuel: "I regret having made Saul king, because he has turned away from me, and has not carried out my command." Samuel was so troubled by this that he cried to Yahweh the whole night; and next

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<sup>1</sup> MT "Telaim"; see Josh. xv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> ? MT "10,000 men of Judah."

<sup>3</sup> MT "Havilah" (see Gen. xxv. 18).



morning early he rose and went to meet Saul, but was told that Saul had come to Carmel, and after erecting a monument had turned and moved on down to Gilgal.

When Samuel came to Saul, Saul hailed him with "Welcome in the name of Yahweh! I have carried out the command of Yahweh." But Samuel answered, "What then is this bleating of sheep that strikes my ear? And this lowing of oxen that I hear?" "These," said Saul, "have been brought home from Amalek. The people have spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to Yahweh your God. The rest we have put to the ban." Then Samuel said to Saul: "Say no more! I must tell you what Yahweh spoke to me last night." He answered, "Say on!" Samuel continued:

<sup>1</sup>"Is it not true that, little as you may be in your own estimation, you are the head of the tribes of Israel? for Yahweh anointed you king over Israel. And Yahweh sent you on a particular errand, and said to you 'Go and put the ban on those sinners the Amalekites, making war upon them till °you have° exterminated °them.°' Why, then, have you not obeyed Yahweh's command, but pounced on the spoil, and done a thing displeasing to Yahweh?" Saul replied: "°I did° obey the command of Yahweh; I went the way which Yahweh sent me; I brought back Agag the king of the Amalekites, and put the ban on Amalek. But the people took part of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of what fell under the ban, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God in Gilgal." Samuel answered:

"Less pleasing to Yahweh is holocaust<sup>2</sup> and sacrifice

Than obedience to Yahweh's voice.

Yea, to obey is better than sacrifice,—

To hearken than fat of rams.

For contumacy is sin like witchcraft,

And presumption a crime like idols.

Since you have rejected the word of Yahweh,

He rejects you as king <sup>3</sup>of Israel<sup>3</sup>."

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<sup>1</sup> The verses retracted in the margin are probably a later expansion of the narrative.

[<sup>2</sup> See note on p. 22.]

3—3 Added by LXX, etc.



Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned! I have transgressed against the command of Yahweh and against your word, because I was afraid of the people and yielded to their will. But now, I pray you, forgive my sin, and turn back with me that I may worship Yahweh." But Samuel refused to turn back with him.

"Inasmuch as you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has rejected you as king over Israel." Then, as Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the corner of his mantle, and it tore off in his hand. "Thus," said Samuel, "does Yahweh tear the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and give it to another, a better man than you. Nor does the God<sup>1</sup> of Israel ever lie or repent, for he is not a man that he should repent." "I have sinned!" said Saul, "Yet now show me respect before the elders of my people and before Israel: turn back with me, that I may worship Yahweh your God." Samuel then turned back with Saul, and Saul worshipped Yahweh.

Then Samuel ordered Agag the king of the Amalekites to be brought to him. As Agag, <sup>2</sup>all of a tremble,<sup>2</sup> came forward to him, he said, "Truly the bitterness of death is past!" But Samuel answered:

"As your sword has women made childless,  
So your mother 'mong women be childless;"

and so saying he cut Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal.

After this Samuel departed to Ramah, while Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel never saw Saul again to the day of his death, but he mourned for Saul, because Yahweh repented of having made him king over Israel.

## (2) *Saul's Disobedience costs him the Kingdom* (xiii. 7b-15a).

Saul was still in Gilgal, while all the people forsook him in terror. "He waited" seven days till the time "appointed by" Samuel; but when Samuel failed to appear at Gilgal, and the people "dropped away" from him, Saul ordered the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings to be brought to him, and he offered the burnt-offering. No sooner had he done so than

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[<sup>1</sup> This word was accidentally omitted in MT.—Ed.]

<sup>2—2</sup> A slight emendation.

Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to meet him and welcome him. Samuel asked him, "What have you done?" and Saul answered, "When I saw that the people were deserting me, and you had not kept your appointment, and that the Philistines were massing in Michmash, I thought to myself, 'Now the Philistines will be down upon me to Gilgal before I have secured the good-will of Yahweh,' so I took my courage in both hands and offered the burnt-offering." "You have acted foolishly," replied Samuel. "°If° you had but kept the injunction which Yahweh your God laid upon you, Yahweh would have confirmed your kingdom over Israel for ever. But now your kingdom shall not stand; Yahweh has looked out a man after his own heart and appointed him prince over his people, because you have disobeyed Yahweh's commandment." With this Samuel rose up, left Gilgal, and <sup>1</sup>went his way.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Added from LXX.

## II. SAUL AND DAVID.

(1 Sam. xvi.-2 Sam. i.)

### I. THE SECRET ANOINTING OF DAVID BY SAMUEL (1 Sam. xvi. 1-13).

*This passage seems to have been inserted by an editor as a counterpart to the anointing of Saul in ch. x. It records an incident which was evidently unknown to the writers of the following sections (see especially xvii. 13f, 28 ; 2 Sam. ii. 4).*

Yahweh said to Samuel : " Why do you go on mourning for Saul, when you know that I have counted him unworthy to reign over Israel ? Fill your horn with oil and go ; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite ; for I have seen in one of his sons a king to my mind." But Samuel answered, " How can I go ? If Saul heard of it he would kill me." To this Yahweh replied : " Take a young cow with you, and say you have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. You will invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and then I will show you what to do, and you will anoint him whom I name to you."

So Samuel did as Yahweh directed. When he came to Bethlehem the elders of the city met him in some trepidation and asked, " Is this an auspicious visit ? " He answered, " Assuredly ! I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and come with me to the sacrifice." He also sanctified Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. When they were come, he looked at Eliab, and thought, " <sup>1</sup>Surely this is Yahweh's captain<sup>1</sup>—his anointed ! " But Yahweh said to Samuel, " Do not judge by his looks, or his tall stature, for I count him unfit. What man sees is <sup>2</sup>not what God sees.<sup>2</sup> Man looks on appearances, but Yahweh looks on the heart." Jesse then called on Abinadab, and paraded him before Samuel ; but he said, " Neither is this Yahweh's choice." Jesse next presented Shammah, and Samuel said, " Nor this either." And when Jesse had thus paraded his seven sons before

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A slight emendation ; MT would read, " Surely before Yahweh is his anointed."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Added from LXX.

Samuel, Samuel said to him, "Yahweh has not chosen any of these."

Samuel then asked Jesse, "Are these all the lads you have?" and he said, "There is still ° ° the youngest. You see, he is looking after the sheep." "Send for him at once," said Samuel. "We will not sit down to eat until he comes." So he sent and fetched him—a fair-haired boy, with beautiful eyes, and good-looking. Yahweh said, "Quick, anoint him! This is the one." Samuel accordingly took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh descended on David from that time onward. And Samuel got up and returned to Ramah.

## 2. DAVID'S INTRODUCTION TO SAUL'S COURT (xvi. 14-23).

Saul being now forsaken by the spirit of Yahweh, was tormented by an evil spirit sent from Yahweh. His courtiers said to him, "It is plain that some evil demon<sup>1</sup> is tormenting you. Let our lord say the word, and we your servants before you will look for a man who can play on the harp, so that when the demon is on you he may play with his hand, and you will get relief." "Do so," said Saul to his courtiers. "Seek me out some one who is a skilled harp-player, and bring him to me." One of the pages here put in his word and said: "Why, I know a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who can play the harp—[a brave and soldierly man, too]<sup>2</sup> tactful in speech, and good-looking—a man befriended by Yahweh." Accordingly Saul sent messengers to Jesse with a request that he would send him his son David [who was with the sheep].<sup>3</sup> So Jesse took five<sup>4</sup> loaves, a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them with David his son to Saul. David came and presented himself before Saul, and Saul conceived a great liking for him, and made him an armour-bearer. He sent a message to Jesse to say, "Let David enter my service, for he pleases me greatly." So whenever

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<sup>1</sup> "Spirit of God," i.e., superhuman spirit.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase is hardly consistent with what follows: an experienced soldier would not be reduced to the rank of an armour-bearer.

<sup>3</sup> Probably an addition.

<sup>4</sup> MT "an ass."

the demon came on Saul David would take his harp, and play, and Saul was soothed and cheered, and the evil spirit left him.

### 3. DAVID'S ENCOUNTER WITH GOLIATH (xvii. 1-xviii. 5).

*The extensive omissions in the Greek text of the original LXX, as compared with the Hebrew, enable us to disentangle two narratives in this passage. The portions common to the MT and (original) LXX form a complete narrative (A) which is at least consistent with the view that David was already a member of Saul's court, as recorded above. Putting together the sections omitted by LXX we obtain another account (B), fragmentary indeed, but obviously independent of A. It begins by introducing David to the reader, and ends with his introduction to Saul.*

#### A. (xvii. 1-11 ; 32-40 ; 42-48a ; 49 ; 51-54).

About this time the Philistines called out their forces for war, and concentrated in Shochoh, which belongs to Judah, forming a camp between Shochoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim (?). Saul and the men of Israel also assembled, encamping in the valley of Elah,<sup>1</sup> and drew up in battle order against the Philistines. The Philistines were posted on the heights on one side, and the Israelites on the other side, with a ravine between them.

There stepped forth from the "ranks" of the Philistines the champion,<sup>2</sup> by name Goliath of Gath, whose height was nine feet<sup>3</sup> and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and wore a corslet of scale armour which weighed 220 pounds<sup>4</sup> in bronze. He had bronze greaves on his legs, and carried a bronze javelin between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and its iron head was 26 pounds<sup>5</sup> in weight. His shield-bearer walked before him. Standing thus he cried to the Israelite ranks, "Why do you come out and draw up for battle? Am not I the Philistine and you servants of

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<sup>1</sup> "The Terebinth-tree."

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the word is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> Six cubits.

<sup>4</sup> 5,000 shekels.

<sup>5</sup> 600 shekels.

Saul ? °Choose° your man, and let him come down to me ! If he is able to fight and kill me, we will be slaves to you ; but if I overcome and kill him, then you shall be subject to us and serve us.” “ I flout the armies of Israel this day,” said the Philistine, “ Give me a man, and let us fight one another.”

As Saul and all Israel listened to these words of the Philistine, they were smitten with abject fear. But David said to Saul, “ <sup>1</sup>Do not lose courage, my lord<sup>1</sup> ; I your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” Saul answered, “ You cannot go against this Philistine and fight with him. You are but a youth, and he a trained soldier from his youth.” David answered, “ When your servant used to be a shepherd to his father, a lion or a bear would often come and carry off a sheep from the flock ; and I have gone out after him and struck him, and rescued the sheep from his mouth. And if the brute attacked me, I would seize him by the beard,<sup>2</sup> and kill him outright. Both lion and bear has your servant killed ; and this uncircumcised Philistine, who has flouted the armies of the living God, shall suffer the same fate as they. Yahweh,” said David, “ who delivered me from the clutches of the lion and the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Then Saul said to David, “ Go, then ; and Yahweh be with you ! ” So Saul put his soldier’s tunic on David, and a bronze helmet on his head, <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> and girded David with his sword over the tunic. But David <sup>4</sup>had difficulty<sup>4</sup> in walking, because he had not tried it ; and he said to Saul, “ I cannot go in this gear, for I am not used to it.” So °they° took °the armour° off him. Then, taking his staff in his hand, he picked five smooth stones from the bed of the stream, and put them in his wallet,<sup>5</sup> and with his sling in his hand he advanced towards the Philistine.

When the Philistine looked up and saw David, he regarded

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX ; MT “ Let no man lose courage.”

<sup>2</sup> So MT, although neither the lion nor the bear has a beard. LXX “ throat.”

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT adds : “ and clothed him in a coat of mail ” ; LXX omits.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> LXX.

<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew word occurs only here. The preceeding phrase, “ the shepherd’s bag which he had,” was probably inserted to explain it.

him with contempt, for he was but a lad [a fair-haired, handsome youth]<sup>1</sup>. “Am I a dog,” he cried to David, “that *you* attack me with a stick ?” and he cursed David by his gods. “Come here to me,” he went on, “and I will give your flesh to the birds of heaven, and the beasts of the field.” But David answered the Philistine, “*You* come against me with sword and spear and javelin ; but *I* come against you in the name of Yahweh Zebaoth, the God of the battle-ranks of Israel, which you have flouted. This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand ; I will kill you and take off your head, and give <sup>2</sup>your<sup>2</sup> dead body <sup>2</sup>and those of<sup>2</sup> the Philistine army this day to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth ; and all the world shall know that there is a God °in° Israel. °Yes !° all assembled here to-day shall know that not with sword or spear °is victory gained,° but Yahweh decides the issue of battle ; and he will deliver you all into our hands.”

Then when the Philistine got up and came towards David,  
 ° ° David put his hand into the bag, took thence a stone, and slung it, hitting the Philistine with such force that the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell prone on his face to the ground. David then ran forward, and, standing over the Philistine, took his sword <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> and killed him outright, and cut off his head with it. The Philistines, seeing that their hero was dead, took to flight ; and the men of Israel and Judah sprang to arms and raised the battle-shout, and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath<sup>4</sup> and the very gates of Ekron ; the Philistine dead falling in the way °from Shaaraim° to Gath and Ekron. Then the Israelites turned back from the pursuit of the Philistines and looted their camp. [David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but his armour he put in his own tent.]<sup>5</sup>

B. (xvii. 12-31 ; 41 ; 48<sup>b</sup> ; 50 ; 55-58 ; xviii. 1-5.)

David was a son of °an° Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps inserted from xvi. 12.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT “and drew it from the scabbard” ; LXX omits.

<sup>4</sup> So LXX ; MT “the valley.”

<sup>5</sup> This statement is unhistorical, since Jerusalem was not then in the possession of the Israelites.



named Jesse [who had eight sons]<sup>1</sup>. The man himself <sup>2</sup>was too old for military service in the days of Saul,<sup>2</sup> but his <sup>°</sup>three<sup>°</sup> oldest sons had followed Saul to the war. The names of the three who had thus gone to the war were : Eliab the oldest, Abinadab the second, and Shammah the third : David was the youngest [and the three older had followed Saul]<sup>3</sup>. [David was going and coming between being with Saul and keeping his father's sheep at Bethlehem. The Philistine drew near and took his stand morning and evening for forty days]<sup>4</sup>.

So Jesse said to his son David one day, "Take this bushel of parched corn for your brothers, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to your brothers at the camp. And these ten milk cheeses you will bring to the commander of their regiment ; and see how your brothers are getting on, and take a token from them." Now Saul and they, with all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

Next morning David rose early, handed over the flock to a keeper, and loaded up and went as his father Jesse had bidden him. He came to the entrenchment just as the army was marching out in order of battle, and raising the war-cry ; so that Israel and the Philistines were drawn up opposite to each other. So David put down his stuff in charge of the baggage-keeper, and ran to the front, and came and asked after the welfare of his brothers. As he was speaking with them, up came the champion—the Philistine, Goliath by name, from Gath—from the ranks of the Philistines, with his usual harangue, and David heard it. But all the Israelites at sight of the man fled before him in great fear. A man of Israel was heard to say, "Have you seen this man who is coming up ? It is to flout Israel that he comes up ! And the man who kills him the king will endow with great riches, and give him his daughter in marriage, and enfranchise his family in Israel." David said to the men standing near him, "What shall be done to the man who kills yon Philistine, and wipes out an affront from Israel ?

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<sup>1</sup> Probably inserted from ch. xvi. 12.

<sup>2—2</sup> This ingenious emendation seems to give the simplest remedy for an unintelligible text.

<sup>3</sup> Superfluous.

<sup>4</sup> The first sentence has been added to account for David's being at Bethlehem, after xvi. 21f ; the second is out of place here.



Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should flout the armies of the living God ? ” The people answered in the same terms : “ Such and such will be done to the man who kills him.” But Eliab his oldest brother heard him talk with the men, and said angrily to David, “ What in the world brings you down here ? On whom have you thrown the care of those few sheep in the desert ? I know your saucy and petulant temper ! It is to see the battle that you have come down.” “ What have I done now ? ” said David. “ Surely I may speak a word ! ” He turned away from him to another, and put the same question ; and the people answered him as before.

But David’s words found a hearing, and were reported in the presence of Saul. °They° took him \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

As the Philistine drew nearer and nearer [to David],<sup>2</sup> with his shield-bearer marching before him, David ran quickly °from° the ranks to meet him. \* \* \* \* \* And David overcame the Philistine with a sling and a stone : he hit and killed the Philistine, although David had no sword in his hand.

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Now when Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner his commander-in-chief, “ Whose son is that stripling, Abner ? ” “ Upon your life, king,” said Abner, “ I do not know.” “ Find out, then, whose son the youth is,” said the king. So when David returned after killing the Philistine, Abner took him and introduced him to Saul, with the Philistine’s head in his hand. Saul asked him, “ Whose son are you, my lad ? ” and David answered, “ I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem.” \* \* \* \* \*

At the end of David’s conversation with Saul, Jonathan’s heart was knit to David’s, with a love equal to his love for himself. And Saul took him into his service that very day, and would not let him go back to his father’s house. Jonathan

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<sup>1</sup> What immediately followed in this narrative, it is difficult to conjecture. Luc. proceeds : “ and brought him to Saul.” But if Saul had had an interview with David before the fight, would he have let him go without inquiring who he was, as in v. 55 ?

<sup>2</sup> Better omitted ; the following words show that in this account David had not yet left the ranks.

made a covenant with David, because he loved him even as he loved himself ; he took off the mantle which he wore and gave it to David ; also his tunic, his sword, his bow and his girdle. And David went forth : every task which Saul imposed upon him he executed successfully ; so that Saul set him over the men of war ; and he became a favourite with all the people, and even with the courtiers of Saul.

#### 4. SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID, AND ATTEMPTS ON HIS LIFE (xviii. 6-xx. 1a).

*In this and following sections we have a mixed collection of incidents drawn from various sources. Partly with the help of the LXX, and partly from internal indications, we can isolate a main narrative, into which secondary fragments have been inserted. In the translation secondary passages are printed with an inlet in the margin, so that the leading narrative may be read consecutively. Sections marked by the asterisk (\*) are not in the original LXX.*

xviii. 6-9. [As they came home on David's return from killing the Philistine]<sup>1</sup> the women from all the cities of Israel came out °in dances° to meet David<sup>2</sup> with tambourines and merry-making and cymbals. And the refrain of the ° ° women's song was

“Saul has slain his thousands ;  
David his tens of thousands.”

[Saul was very angry at this, and]<sup>1</sup> The affair annoyed Saul ; for, said he, “They give David the tens of thousands, and to me only the thousands” [now he wants nothing but the kingdom]<sup>1</sup> ! And Saul kept a spiteful eye on David from that time onward.

\*xviii. 10, 11. The next day an evil demon took possession of Saul, and he went raving mad inside the house, while David was playing on the harp, as was his daily custom. Saul had a spear in his hand, and suddenly he poised the spear, meaning to pin David to the wall with it. But David evaded it twice.

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<sup>1</sup> Wanting in LXX. The incident really belongs to a later stage of David's career.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT “King Saul.”

xviii. 12-16. Saul then, being afraid of David [—for Yahweh was with him, while he had forsaken Saul—]<sup>1</sup> removed him from his presence, giving him the command of a regiment. Thus he went out and in at the head of the people. And David was successful in all his undertakings, because Yahweh was with him ; and Saul, observing his great good fortune, stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, as he went out and in at their head.

\*xviii. 17-19. One day Saul said to David, “ There is my elder daughter Merab ! I would give her to you for a wife ; only you must show yourself a man of mettle in fighting the battles of Yahweh.”—Saul said this hoping that David might meet his death at the hands of the Philistines rather than at his.—But David answered, “ What am I, and what are <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> my father’s folk in Israel, that I should aspire to be the king’s son-in-law ? ” However, when the time came for Merab, Saul’s daughter, to be given in marriage to David, she was given to another man—Adriel of Meholah.

xviii. 20-29a. Now Michal, Saul’s daughter, fell in love with David, and when Saul was told of it, he thought it a good thing, saying to himself, “ I will let him have her, and she will be the means of bringing him into the hands of the Philistines.”  
<sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> So Saul ordered his courtiers to sound David privately by talking thus : “ Look here ! You stand high in the king’s favour ; all his court like you ; why not become the king’s son-in-law ? ” But when the courtiers talked in this strain in David’s hearing, he answered, “ Does it seem to you such an easy thing to be the king’s son-in-law—for a poor and low-born man like me ? ” The courtiers reported David’s words to Saul ; and Saul replied, “ Tell David that the king has no desire for any purchase price, other than a hundred Philistines’ fore-skins, by way of taking vengeance on the king’s enemies.”—But Saul reckoned on David’s falling by the hands of the Philistines.—The courtiers accordingly took this message to

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<sup>1</sup> Wanting in LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> MT “ my clan ” (?).

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT inserts a sentence not in LXX which seems to mean “ And Saul said to David, ‘ You may now become my son-in-law twice over. ’ ”

David, and then it seemed to him an excellent way of becoming the king's son-in-law. <sup>1</sup> .<sup>1</sup> So he set about it, and went out with his men, killed one hundred<sup>2</sup> of the Philistines, brought their foreskins, <sup>3</sup>and counted them out in full tale<sup>3</sup> to the king, that so he might become his son-in-law. Saul then gave him his daughter Michal in marriage. But Saul saw that Yahweh was with David, and that <sup>4</sup>all Israel<sup>4</sup> loved him; and he was more afraid of David than ever.

\*xviii. 29b, 30. Saul now cherished unremitting enmity to David. But as often as the Philistine generals took the field, David scored greater successes than all the rest of Saul's servants, and his reputation stood very high.

xix. 1-10. Saul now talked with Jonathan and his whole court of having David put to death. Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a strong affection for David;

So Jonathan told David that his father Saul meant to kill him, and said, "Be on your guard in the morning, and <sup>5</sup>keep yourself closely hidden.<sup>5</sup> I on my part will come out and stand at my father's side in the fields where you are. I will speak of you with my father, and if I note anything suspicious I will let you know."<sup>6</sup>

And he spoke well of him to Saul his father, and said, "Let the king beware of wronging his servant David, for he has never wronged you, and his actions have been greatly to your advantage. For he took his life in his hand that time when he slew the Philistine, whereby Yahweh wrought a great victory for all Israel; you saw it yourself and rejoiced. Why, then, should you incur the guilt of innocent blood, by killing David for no reason at all?" So Saul yielded to Jonathan's remonstrance, and swore an oath by the life of Yahweh that he should not be put to death. Jonathan then sent for David, and told him

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> MT inserts "and the time had not expired"; not in LXX.

<sup>2</sup> LXX; MT 200.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Luc., etc.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> LXX; MT "his daughter Michal."

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So LXX.

<sup>6</sup> The preceding verses appear to have been inserted from another document.

everything ; he brought him to Saul, and he was in the royal presence as of old.

But as the war was renewed David led an expedition against the Philistines and defeated them with great slaughter, putting them to flight. Then an evil spirit from Yahweh came on Saul, as he sat in his house, spear in hand. While David was playing on the harp, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with the spear. But David jumped aside before Saul, so that he stuck the spear into the wall ; while David saved himself by flight. ° °

xix. 11-17. <sup>1</sup>That night<sup>1</sup> Saul sent agents to watch David's house, meaning to kill him in the morning. Michal his wife told David of this and said, " Unless you make good your escape this night, to-morrow you will be a dead man." So she let him down through the window, and David fled and got clear away. Michal then took the household idol,<sup>2</sup> and laid it on the bed, with a fly-net (?)<sup>3</sup> of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with a garment ; and when Saul sent messengers to seize David, she told them that he was sick. Saul sent the messengers back to see David, with orders to bring him, bed and all, that he might kill him. The messengers came, and lo ! there was the idol on the bed, and the fly-net of goats' hair at its head ! Saul said to Michal, " Why have you deceived me thus, letting my enemy go and make his escape ? " Michal answered, " It was he who made me let him go, for he threatened to kill me."

xix. 18-xx. 1a. *David with Samuel at Ramah.*—When David had made his escape, he came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him ; and he and Samuel went and stayed in the <sup>4</sup>prophets' quarters.<sup>4</sup> When Saul was informed that David was there, he sent emissaries to apprehend him. But when °they° saw the group of prophets in ecstatic frenzy, with Samuel presiding over them, the spirit of God came on Saul's messengers,

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. " Teraphim."

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the word is uncertain.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Heb. " Naioth," which may be a proper name ; though Ramah was hardly large enough to have another locality within it.

and they too were seized with the ecstasy. Saul, hearing of this, sent other messengers; and they were taken in the same way. Yet a third time he sent messengers; and they were seized also. At last he himself set out for Ramah, and coming to the cistern of the <sup>1</sup>threshing-floor on the knoll,<sup>1</sup> he inquired where Samuel and David were; and was told, "Why, in the prophets' quarters in Ramah." But as he went on <sup>o</sup>from<sup>o</sup> there, the spirit of God came on him too, and he walked along in an ecstasy till he reached the prophets' quarters in Ramah. There he threw off his clothes like the rest, and raved before Samuel, till he fell down in a swoon, and lay naked all that day and all the next night. Hence arose the saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

David then fled from the prophets' quarters in Ramah, and came \* \* \* \* \*

## 5. DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL'S COURT (xx. 1b-xxi. 15).

### (1) *Jonathan warns David of his Danger* (xx. 1b-42).

*The beginning of this narrative seems to have been lost in the process of compilation. David and Jonathan are alone together; and David—*

\* \* \* asked Jonathan to his face: "What have I done? What wrong or fault does your father think I have committed, that he seeks my life?" He replied, "Impossible! Your life is in no danger. Just consider! My father does nothing, great or small, but he takes me into his confidence: why should he hide a thing like this from me? There is nothing in this." But David still protested and said, "Your father is well aware that you are on friendly terms with me, and naturally he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or it would grieve him.' But as surely as Yahweh lives, and you are alive, there is just a step between me and death." Jonathan then offered to do anything that David might suggest; and David made the following proposal: "You know," he said, "that it is New Moon to-morrow, when I ought to dine with the king. Let me go, then, and hide myself outside the town till the

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX, etc.

evening<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>. If your father misses me at all, you can say, 'David got leave from me to pay a flying visit to Bethlehem, his own city, where the annual sacrifice is to take place for all the clan.' If he then expresses himself as satisfied, I am in no danger; but if he flares up in a passion, you may be sure that he is bent on my destruction. Do me this favour, seeing you have entered into a <sup>2</sup>solemn covenant<sup>2</sup> with your servant. Or, if any guilt lies on me, kill me yourself; but don't give me over to your father." "Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Jonathan: "If I should discover that my father is bent on destroying you, I will certainly inform you of that." "But," said David, "who will bring me word, °in the event° of your father giving you a harsh answer?"

(vv. 11-17. *From another Source.*) \* \* \* Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the country." So they went out together. Jonathan then spoke to David as follows: "Yahweh, God of Israel, <sup>3</sup>be witness<sup>3</sup>! When I sound my father about this time to-morrow, <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> if I find him well disposed to David, I will certainly send for you then, and make it known to you. If on the other hand my father has made up his mind to destroy you, then may God's<sup>5</sup> heaviest curse light on Jonathan, if I do not disclose it you, and let you go away in safety. And may Yahweh be with you, as he has been with my father! <sup>6</sup>Only, I ask<sup>6</sup> that as long as I am alive you will show me the kindness of Yahweh; and that if I die you will never withdraw your kindness from my house. And when Yahweh shall have cut off from the ground David's enemies to the last man, should Jonathan's °name° be cut off from the house of David, may Yahweh exact vengeance for it at the hand of <sup>7</sup> <sup>7</sup> David!" And

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1—1 MT "of the third day," rightly omitted by LXX.

2—2 Lit. "covenant of Yahweh."

3—3 Inserted from Syr.

4—4 MT "the third day."

5 So LXX preserving the usual formula; MT "Yahweh's."

6—6 Following LXX. The construction is very involved.

7—7 MT "the enemies of."



Jonathan again <sup>1</sup>swore to David<sup>1</sup> by his love for him ; for he loved him as his own life.

Jonathan replied, " To-morrow being New Moon, you will be missed when your seat is seen to be empty. On the third day, when you will have <sup>2</sup>been very much missed,<sup>2</sup> come to the place where you hid yourself on the day of the Action,<sup>3</sup> and remain beside <sup>4</sup>yonder mound. I will then on the third day<sup>4</sup> shoot arrows by the side of it, as if shooting at a mark ; and will send my lad to find the arrow.<sup>5</sup> Then if I say to the youth, " See, the arrow<sup>5</sup> is on this side of you ; take it up ! " you may come, for all is well with you ; there is nothing to fear, as Yahweh lives. But if I say to the youth, " See the arrow is beyond you," then go ; for Yahweh sends you away. And as for the word which you and I have spoken to each other, Yahweh is °the witness° between you and me for ever." So David went into hiding in the open country.

When the New Moon came, the king took his seat at table to eat. The king sat in his usual place on the seat by the wall. Jonathan <sup>6</sup>sat facing<sup>6</sup> him, and Abner at Saul's side, while David's place was vacant. Saul made no remark that day ; for he thought something might have happened to David to make him unclean, and he had not been able to purify himself. But the next day, the second day of the New Moon, when he noticed David's place still empty, Saul said to his son Jonathan, " Why has the son of Jesse not come to table either yesterday or to-day ? " Jonathan answered, " David asked leave of me to go as far as Bethlehem. He said, ' Do let me go, for we have a clan sacrifice in the city, and my brothers °have invited me.° So, if you hold me dear, let me off to see my brothers.' That is why he does not come to the royal table." Then Saul burst out in anger against Jonathan, and said, " Son of a strumpet<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX ; MT "made David swear."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to some unknown episode in David's career.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> After LXX, etc. ; MT unintelligible.

<sup>5</sup> MT "arrows."

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> LXX.

<sup>7</sup> Or, "a run-away slave girl."



that yōu are ! Do I not know that you are 'in league' with the son of Jesse, to your own shame and the shame of your mother's womb ? For so long as the son of Jesse lives above the ground, neither you nor your kingship is secure. Send for him at once and bring him to me ; for he is deserving of death." Jonathan answered his father by asking, " Why should he be put to death ? What has he done ? " Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. But when Jonathan saw that David's death was fully resolved on by his father, he rose from the table in hot wrath, having eaten nothing on that second day of the New Moon ; for he was heart-sore for David, because his father had maligned him.

Next morning Jonathan went out into the country, to the place arranged with David, taking a young lad with him. He said to the lad, " Run, now, and find the arrow° which I shall shoot ! " And as the lad ran, he shot the arrow so as to fly beyond him. When the lad came to where the arrow lay that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after him, " Isn't the arrow beyond you ? " And again he cried after him, " Quick ! Hurry up ! Don't stand there ! " So Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and °brought it° to his master. But the lad knew nothing ; only Jonathan and David knew what it meant.

° David then rose and went away, while Jonathan returned to the city.

<sup>2</sup>Jonathan then handed his weapons to his lad, and bade him go and take them to the city. When the boy was gone David rose up from the side of the °mound,° prostrated himself, and bowed three times to the earth. They kissed each other, and wept on each other, °and David wept longest° (?). At last Jonathan said, " Go in peace, seeing we two have sworn by the name of Yahweh, that Yahweh will be °witness° between you and me, and between your descendants and mine for evermore ! "

[2) *David's Visit to Ahimelech at Nob* (xxi. 1-9).

David then came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech was alarmed by David's arrival, and said, " Why are you alone

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2</sup> These verses (40-42a) miss the whole point of Jonathan's signal to David, and must have been added later.

and unattended ? ” David answered, “ The king has entrusted me with a certain mission, and said that no one must know anything of the errand on which he has sent me or the business he has charged me with ; so I have <sup>1</sup>made an appointment with<sup>1</sup> my men to meet me at a place I must not name. But now, °if° you have five loaves of bread to spare, give them to me, or whatever you can lay your hands on.” The priest replied, “ There is no common bread in my possession, but there is sacred bread ; have your young men at least kept themselves from women ? ” <sup>2</sup>“ O certainly ! ” said David, in answer to the priest. “ Women had been taboo to us for some days when I came away, so that the men’s equipment was holy, although this is no sacred expedition ; much more are they holy in their equipment to-day (?).”<sup>2</sup> Then the priest gave him sacred bread ; for there was no bread there except the shew-bread, which is taken from Yahweh’s presence to be replaced by fresh bread on the day when it is removed.

But there was present that day one of Saul’s servants, who was under restraint before Yahweh : his name was Doeg,—an Edomite, the °most stalwart of Saul’s runners° (?).

David then said to Ahimelech, “ Have you no spear or sword at hand here ? I came away without my sword or weapons ; the king’s command was so urgent.” The priest answered, “ There is the sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you slew in the valley of Elah ; it is wrapped in a covering behind the ephod<sup>3</sup>. If you care to take that you may have it ; there is nothing else here.” “ There is none like it ! ” said David ; “ Give me it.”

### (3) *David at Gath* (xxi. 10-15).<sup>4</sup>

David set out that day on his flight from Saul, and came to Achish, king of Gath. The courtiers of Achish said to him, “ Why ! this is David, the king of the country—he of whom they used to sing, ‘ Saul has slain his thousands : David his tens of thousands ! ’ ” When David realised the import of these words he was very much afraid of Achish

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> The interpretation of David’s answer is extremely precarious.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 13, n. 2<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> This episode, in view of xxvii. 2ff, can hardly be historical.

the king of Gath. So he feigned insanity °before° them, and behaved like a madman in their hands, °banging° on the doors of the gates, and letting his saliva run down his beard. Achish said to his courtiers, “Look! You see the man is a lunatic; why do you bring him to me? Have I any lack of lunatics, that you have brought me this one to pester me with his mad antics? Would you have this man enter my house?”

## 6. DAVID’S ADVENTURES AS AN OUTLAW, HUNTED BY SAUL (xxii.-xxvi.).

### (1) *David in Adullam and Moab* (xxii. 1-5).

Departing thence, David made his escape to the mountain-fastness<sup>1</sup> of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his family connections heard of this they came down to him there. There gathered round him also all sorts of men in distress, men who were in debt, discontented men; and he became their captain. He had thus about 400 men under him.

From there he went to [Mizpeh in] Moab, and requested the king of Moab that his father and mother might °remain° with them till he should see what God would do for him. So he left them at the court of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the fastness. But Gad the prophet said to David, “You must not stay in the fastness, but leave it and betake yourself to the land of Judah.” So David left, and came to the forest of Hereth.

### (2) *The Massacre of the Priests of Nob* (xxii. 6-23).

In due time Saul learned that David and his men had been discovered. Now Saul was at the time holding court at Gibeah, sitting spear in hand under the tamarisk-tree<sup>2</sup> on the high-place,<sup>2</sup> with all his courtiers round him. Addressing the courtiers as they stood round him, Saul said, “Men of Benjamin, listen to me! Will the son of Jesse give all of you farms and vineyards, and make all of you commanders of regiments and companies

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<sup>1</sup> MT “cave.”

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX; MT “in Ramah,” or “on the height (?)”

that [you have all conspired against me, and that no one let me know when my son entered into a covenant with the son of Jesse, and]<sup>1</sup> that none of you <sup>2</sup>had the kindness<sup>2</sup> to inform me that my son had set up my servant as a rival<sup>3</sup> to me, as is now plainly the case ? ” Here Doeg the Edomite, who was standing near the courtiers of Saul, spoke out and said, “ I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, who consulted Yahweh for him, and supplied him with provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” Thereupon the king sent and summoned Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, the priest, and all his brethren the priesthood of Nob. When they had all come to the king, Saul said, “ Hear me, son of Ahitub ! ” Ahimelech answered, “ At your service, my lord ! ” Saul continued, “ Why have you conspired against me with the son of Jesse, giving him food and a sword, and consulting God for him, in order that he might rise up as a rival<sup>3</sup> to me, as clearly appears to-day ? ” Ahimelech said in answer to the king, “ Who then of all your servants was so much to be trusted as David—the king’s son-in-law, the captain of your bodyguard, and honoured in your house ? Or is this the first time I have consulted God for him ? I repel the charge ! Let the king lay no imputation on his servant [or his father’s house] ; for your servant has no knowledge whatever of all this.” But the king replied, “ You must die, Ahimelech, you and all your brethren.” Then the king gave an order to his runners who were standing by him : “ Come forward, and slay the priests of Yahweh ; because they too are hand-in-glove with David, for when they knew that he was fleeing from me they did not let me know.” But the king’s servants refused to lift a hand to strike down the priests of Yahweh. Then the king turned to Doeg with the order to come forward and strike down the priests. So Doeg the Edomite came forward and he fell on the priests, killing that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod.<sup>4</sup> In Nob also, the city of the priests, he (Saul ?) put to the sword men and women, children and sucklings, cattle, asses and sheep.

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<sup>1—1</sup> These words are perhaps a variant reading of the following clause.

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX.

<sup>3</sup> LXX.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 13.

Būt one son of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub escaped : namely Abiathar, who fled after David, and told him that Saul had slain the priests of Yahweh. David said, “ I knew at the time, when I saw Doeg the Edomite there, that he would be sure to tell Saul. I <sup>1</sup>am responsible<sup>1</sup> for the lives of all your father’s house. But do you remain with me, and have no fear ; for the man who seeks your life seeks mine also. With me you are in safe keeping.”

(3) *David relieves Keilah from the Philistines* (xxiii. 1-13).

Information then reached David that the Philistines were besieging Keilah and pillaging the threshing-floors. Thereupon he consulted Yahweh : “ Shall I go and attack these Philistines ? ” and the answer was : “ Go, and you will defeat the Philistines and relieve Keilah.” But David’s men objected and said, “ We are in constant fear here [in Judah ?] ; how much more if we go to Keilah against the forces of the Philistines ! ” So David again consulted Yahweh, who answered, “ Rise, and go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.” David then went with his men to Keilah, and fought the Philistines, and carried off their cattle, inflicting a severe defeat upon them. Thus David relieved the people of Keilah.

When Saul was told that David had come to Keilah, he said, “ God has <sup>o</sup>‘delivered’ him into my hand ; he has cut off his escape by entering a city with gates and bars.” So Saul called out all the people for war, meaning to go down to Keilah and besiege David and his men. <sup>2</sup>Now when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David, he came down to Keilah with the ephod.<sup>2</sup> So when David perceived that Saul was scheming mischief against him, he said to Abiathar, “ Bring the ephod here ! ” Then he prayed, “ O Yahweh, God of Israel, thy servant has heard that Saul intends to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> And now, will Saul come down as thy servant has heard ? Yahweh, God of Israel, make it known to thy servant.” Yahweh answered, “ He will.” David then

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1—1 LXX.

2—2 Transposed from the beginning of the paragraph. See p. 13.

3—3 MT inserts wrongly “ Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him ? ” (See next verse.) LXX omits.

asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?" Answer: "They will." On this David got up, and marched out of Keilah with his troop—about 600<sup>1</sup> men—and they went roving about wherever they could. And when Saul learned that David had escaped from Keilah he broke off the expedition.

(4) *David in Ziph and Maon* (xxiii. 14-29).

After this David remained in the wilderness in hill-fastnesses, keeping to the mountainous country [in the wilderness of Ziph]; and though Saul sought him continually God did not give him into his power.

But David was afraid, knowing that Saul was out after his life—he was at this time at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph. But Jonathan, Saul's son, set out and went to David in Horesh, and encouraged him in the name of God, saying to him, "Have no fear! The hand of Saul my father shall never reach you; you shall yet be king over Israel, and I shall be second to you; and that my father Saul knows right well." And they two made a covenant before Yahweh. And David remained in Horesh, while Jonathan returned home.

Certain Ziphites, however, went up to Saul at Gibeah, and said, "Do you know that David is hiding in fastnesses near us in Horesh [in the hill of Hachilah, south of the Desolation]<sup>3</sup>? So, whenever it is your pleasure, O King, to come down to us, come; and we will see to it that he is delivered into the king's hands." Saul answered, "The blessing of Yahweh be on you, since you show kindly feeling for me! Go, then, and take further measures: find out "quickly" the place where his foot rests; for they tell me he is very wily. Find this out every lurking-place where he hides himself, and come back to me without fail<sup>4</sup>; and I will go with you. If he is in the country at all I will ferret him out from all the townships of Judah."

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<sup>1</sup> LXX 400.

<sup>2</sup> Probably borrowed from xxvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. "Jeshimon"—virtually a proper name.

<sup>4</sup> A variant of the preceding sentence, wanting in LXX [but probably scribal error in MT—Ed.].

So they departed and went on before Saul to Ziph. But David and his men were now in the wilderness of Maon, in the steppes to the south of the Desolation.

When Saul and his men set out to seek him, David, being informed of it, went down to the cliff <sup>1</sup>that is<sup>1</sup> in the wilderness of Maon; and Saul, as soon as he heard this, followed David into the wilderness of Maon. Saul <sup>2</sup>and his men<sup>2</sup> went by one side of the mountain; David and his men by the other: David hurrying to get away from Saul, while Saul and his men were on the point of surrounding David and his men, and capturing them. Just then a messenger brought Saul the tidings that the Philistines had invaded the country, urging him to come with all speed. So Saul left off the pursuit of David and marched against the Philistines. Hence that place gets the name of "Separation Cliff." David then went up from there, and made his abode in the fastnesses above Engedi.

(5) *At Engedi: David spares Saul's Life* (xxiv. 1-22).

When Saul returned from his campaign against the Philistines, he was told that David was in the wilderness of Engedi. Then he took 3,000 picked men out of all Israel and set out in search of <sup>3</sup>David. While his men were on the east of the Chamois Rocks, Saul himself<sup>3</sup> came to the sheepfolds on the wayside; where there is a cave into which he entered to relieve himself, not knowing that David and his men were lurking in the recesses of the cave. David's men said to him, "See! This is the day that Yahweh foretold when he said, 'I will put your enemy in your power, to do to him as you like.'" <sup>4</sup>But David answered, "God keep me from doing such a thing to my lord, the anointed of Yahweh, or laying hands on him, seeing he is Yahweh's anointed!" Thus David sharply rebuked his followers, and would not allow them to do Saul any harm. <sup>4</sup>Then he rose and secretly cut off the edge of the mantle that Saul was wearing. But afterwards David's

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<sup>1—1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>3—3</sup> Or (following the punctuation of MT) "David and his men on the east of the Chamois Rocks; and."

<sup>4</sup> *Vv* 5*b*, 6 transposed to follow 8*a*.



conscience smote him for having cut off the edge of Saul's °mantle.°

So when Saul had risen and left the cave and gone along the road, David rose after him, and stepping out of the cave called after Saul, "My lord king!" Saul looked behind him, and David bowed in homage with his face to the ground, and spoke thus to Saul: "Why do you listen to the talk of those who say that David wants to harm you? You have seen this day with your own eyes how when Yahweh put it in my power ° to kill you in the cave <sup>1</sup>I refused to do it.<sup>1</sup> I spared you and said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the anointed of Yahweh.' See, my father! Here is a piece of your mantle in my hand. Since I cut off the edge of your mantle when I might have killed you, you may know for certain that there is neither malice nor treason in my heart; I have never wronged you, although you are watching your opportunity to take my life. Let Yahweh judge between you and me; let Yahweh avenge me upon you; but *my* hand shall not be against you. <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> And, after all, on whom is the king of Israel making war? Whom are you hunting? A dead dog! A solitary flea! May Yahweh be judge and decide between us! May he see to it, and maintain my cause, and vindicate my right against you!"

When David stopped speaking thus to Saul [Saul said, "Is that your voice, David, my son?"<sup>3</sup> Saul wept aloud, and said to David, "You are in the right, and I in the wrong; for *you* have done a good turn to me, while I have done you harm. And you have this day <sup>4</sup>put the crown on all<sup>4</sup> your goodness to me, by refraining from killing me, when Yahweh had put me in your power. When a man has his enemy at his mercy, does he send him safely on his way? May Yahweh reward you richly for what you have done to me to-day! And now I know that you will undoubtedly be king, and that through you

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> "As the old proverb has it: From the wicked proceeds wickedness, but my hand shall not be against you." The verse has been inserted by a scribe who thought he knew the old saying quoted in David's last words.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from xxvi. 17.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> MT "declared."



the realm of Israel will be strengthened. Swear to me, therefore, by Yahweh, that you will not root out my offspring after me, nor efface my name from my father's house." David swore thus to Saul; and Saul went home; but David and his men went up to the fastness.

(6) *David spares Saul's Life at the Hill of Hachilah (xxvi.)—a parallel narrative to (5).*

The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah with the news that David was hiding <sup>1</sup>near them<sup>1</sup> [in the hill of Hachilah, facing the Desolation]. So Saul went down at once to the wilderness of Ziph, taking with him 3,000 picked men of Israel, to hunt for David in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, facing the Desolation, on the road, while David kept to the wilderness. And seeing that Saul had followed him to the wilderness, David sent out spies, and ascertained beyond doubt that Saul had come. Thereupon David got up and came to the place <sup>2</sup>[where Saul was encamped; and having seen the place]<sup>2</sup> where Saul was lying asleep with Abner the son of Ner, his commander-in-chief—Saul was lying within the entrenchment, and the troops camping around him—he spoke to Ahimelech the Hittite, and Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and said, "Which of you will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" Abishai answered, "I will." So David and Abishai came to the army by night; and there was Saul lying asleep within the entrenchment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the men sleeping around him. Said Abishai to David, "God has given your enemy into your hand this day! I will just pin him to the earth with his own spear—a single stroke; no more!" David answered Abishai, "You must not murder him; for who ever laid hands on Yahweh's anointed and was held guiltless? By the life of Yahweh, no!" he continued. "Either Yahweh will smite him, or he will die a natural death, or he will fall in battle; but the Lord forbid that I should

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Omitted by LXX.

put forth my hand against the anointed of Yahweh ! Meanwhile, take the spear that is at his head and the water-jug, and let us be off.” So they °took° the spear and the jug from Saul’s head and came away. And no one saw or heard or woke up ; for they were all plunged in a deep slumber caused by Yahweh.

David then crossed to the opposite side of the valley, and standing at a distance on the top of the hill, so that a great space lay between, he shouted to the people and to Abner the son of Ner : “ Why don’t you answer, Abner ? ” Abner called back, “ Who are you, calling up the king ? ” David answered, “ You are a fine man ! The like of you is not in Israel ! Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king ? Why ! one of the people has come through to murder the king, your master. It is not a very soldierlike thing, this that you have done ! By the life of Yahweh, but you all deserve death for not guarding your master, the anointed of Yahweh. Look now where the king’s spear is, and where the water-jug, that were at his head.”

But Saul now recognised David’s voice, and said, “ Is that your voice, David my son ? ” “ It is, my lord king ! ” answered David. “ Why,” he went on, “ does my lord pursue his servant ? What have I done ? What evil is there in my hands ? Let the king, then, listen to what his servant has to say : If it be Yahweh who has incited you against me, let him be appeased by an offering ; but if it be men who have done it, may they be accursed before Yahweh ; for they have expelled me this day from the fellowship of Yahweh’s people, and said in effect, ‘ Away ! serve other gods.’ But now, let not my blood be spilt on the earth far from the presence of Yahweh ; for the king of Israel has come out to hunt <sup>1</sup>for my life, as the hawk<sup>1</sup> hunts the partridge in the mountains.” Saul said : “ I have sinned ! Come back, my son David ; I will not harm you any more, since you have prized my life highly this day. Oh, I have acted foolishly, and gone very far astray ! ” David said in reply, “ Here is the king’s spear :

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; M<sup>1</sup> “ a single flea, as one.”

let one of the young men come over and fetch it. And Yahweh will reward every man according to his rectitude and his fidelity; when Yahweh put you in my power this day, I would not lay my hand on the anointed of Yahweh. As precious as your life was to me this day, so precious may mine be to Yahweh, and may he rescue me from every danger!" Saul said to David, "God bless you, my son David! You will certainly succeed in all you undertake."

David then went his way, and Saul returned home.

(7) *David and Nabal* (xxv.).

[About this time Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and he was buried in his own house at Ramah. David went down to the wilderness of Maon.¹]

Now in Maon there was a man who had a farm at Carmel—a man of substance, owning 13,000 sheep and 1,000 goats—and for the time he was at the sheep-shearing in Carmel. The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name Abigail; the woman was sensible and good-looking, but the man was rude and ill-natured—a regular Calebite.

David, then, having heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, sent ten young men with the following instructions: "Go up to Carmel; get an interview with Nabal, and give him my compliments. ²Address him as my brother,² and say, 'Good luck to you, and good luck to your household, and to all that is yours! I have just heard that you are engaged in sheep-shearing. Now your shepherds have been in our neighbourhood, and we have not ill-used them, nor have they lost anything all the time they have been in Carmel. Ask your servants, and they will tell you that it is so. Look kindly therefore, on these young men—all the more that we come at a festive season—and give whatever you can lay your hand on ³to your servants, and³ to your son David.'"

David's men came and delivered this message to Nabal in David's name, and paused for his reply. But all the answer they got from Nabal was, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are

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¹ LXX; MT "Paran."

²—² An obscure expression.

³—³ Some texts of LXX omit these words.

many servants now-a-days who break loose from their masters. And I, forsooth, must take my bread and wine,<sup>1</sup> and the beasts I have slaughtered for my own shearers, and give them to men as to whom I do not know where on earth they have come from ! ” Upon this David’s men took their way back to David, and told him all that had happened. David then gave the order to his men, “ Every man gird on his sword ! ” So they all girt on their swords, and David did the same ; and they marched out after David some 400 strong, while 200 remained with the baggage.

In the meantime one of the servants had told Abigail, Nabal’s wife : “ Look here ! David has sent messengers from the wilderness to salute our master, and he has fallen out with them. And really the men were very good to us ; we were not molested, nor did we miss anything all the time we were in their company while we were on the moors. They were like a wall round us by day and by night as long as we were near them tending the flocks. Now consider and see what is to be done ; for ruin threatens our master and all his household. As for him, he is such a fiend that there is no speaking to him.”

Abigail then hurriedly got together 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep ready for cooking, five pecks<sup>2</sup> of parched corn, 100 bunches of raisins and 200 fig-cakes, and put them on asses, telling the servants to go on before her, and she would follow. But to her husband Nabal she said not a word.

As she was riding down on her ass under cover of the hill, David and his men were marching down opposite to her, so that she came upon them suddenly. Now David had been thinking, “ For nothing at all I have guarded the whole of this man’s property in the wilderness, so that nothing belonging to him was lost ; and now he returns evil for my good. May God’s heaviest vengeance light on <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> David, if I leave a single male of his by morning light ! ”

Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from her ass, and fell <sup>4</sup>on her face before him<sup>4</sup> in humble deference.

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<sup>1</sup> LXX ; MT “ waters.”

<sup>2</sup> “ Seahs ” (one-third of an Ephah).

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT wrongly inserts “ the enemies of,” omitted by LXX.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> LXX.

Throwing herself at his feet she said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt! Let your handmaid speak to you freely, and pray hear what she has to say. My lord should pay no heed to this vile creature Nabal, who is just what his name says—Nabal (churl) he is by name, and churl by nature—and I, your handmaid, did not see the young men whom my lord sent. [Truly, my lord, as surely as Yahweh lives, ° ° who has kept you from incurring bloodguilt and taking your revenge into your own hand, I could wish that your enemies and those who seek to injure my lord might be as Nabal.]<sup>1</sup> And now, this present which your maidservant has brought for my lord—let it be given to the young men who accompany my lord. Forgive your handmaid her offence; for Yahweh will assuredly build for my lord a lasting dynasty, because you are fighting the battles of Yahweh, and no wickedness will be found in you all your days. And °should a man arise° to persecute you and seek your life, may my lord's soul be bound up in the bundle of life with Yahweh your God, while he slings away the souls of your enemies as from the pouch of a sling! *Then*—when Yahweh brings to pass all the good which he has promised you, and appoints you prince over Israel—then my lord's conscience will be clear of the compunction and remorse that would follow shedding blood unnecessarily, and seeking redress <sup>2</sup>by his own hand.<sup>2</sup> And when Yahweh brings good fortune to my lord, think of your handmaid."

David replied to Abigail, "All praise to Yahweh the God of Israel, for sending you to meet me this day! Blessings also on your good sense and on yourself, who have kept me back this day from the guilt of bloodshed, and from taking my revenge into my own hand! But truly, by the life of Yahweh the God of Israel, who has kept me from doing you harm, if you had not come so promptly to meet me, there would not have been left a single male of Nabal's by morning light." David then accepted the present she had brought for him, saying to herself, "Go home in peace! See, I yield to your request, and have treated you with respect."

When Abigail got back to Nabal, she found him feasting like

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<sup>1</sup> This sentence comes in prematurely.

<sup>2—2</sup> Inserted from LXX.

a king in his house, and in a very jovial mood ; but as he was very drunk she said nothing to him till the next day. In the morning, when Nabal had slept off his debauch, and his wife told him what had happened, <sup>1</sup>he had an apoplectic fit,<sup>1</sup> and lay like a stone. About ten days later, Yahweh sent a stroke on Nabal, and he died.

On hearing of Nabal's death David exclaimed, "Blessed be Yahweh who has avenged the insult done to me by Nabal, and held back his servant from doing wrong ; but has caused Nabal's wickedness to recoil on his own head !" Then he sent and paid his addresses to Abigail with a view to marriage. And when David's men came to Abigail at Carmel, and told her that David had sent them to take her home as his wife, she rose, bowed her face to the ground, and said, "Why ! Your handmaid is ready to be a slave-girl to wash the feet of my lord's servants." So she rose quickly, and, riding on an ass, accompanied by her five maids on foot, she followed David's messengers, and became his wife.

Now David had already married Ahinoam of Jezreel, so he had them both for wives. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, whom David had married, to Palti the son of Laish, from Gallim.

## 7. DAVID AMONG THE PHILISTINES (I Sam. xxvii.-2 Sam. i.).

### (I) *David becomes a Vassal of Achish of Gath* (xxvii.).

David at last came to the conclusion that sooner or later he must fall into the hands of Saul. "The best I can do," he said to himself, "is to make my escape to the Philistine territory ; then Saul in despair will abandon the search for me within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape from his power." David set out accordingly, and with his 600<sup>2</sup> men went over to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. So David and his men resided with Achish in Gath ; each man with his family, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And Saul, being informed of David's flight to Gath, searched for him no more.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Or, "all spirit died out of him, and he lay . . .," ; lit., "his heart died within him."

<sup>2</sup> LXX, etc., "400."

After a time David said to Achish, "If you are pleased with me, let me have quarters assigned to me in one of the provincial towns, where I may settle: why should your servant live so near you in the capital of the kingdom?" So Achish gave him Ziklag at that time; hence Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day.

The whole time that David spent in Philistine territory was a year and four months. During this period he and his men went out and raided the <sup>1</sup> 'Gizrites and Amalekites, these being the peoples inhabiting the region that extends <sup>2</sup>from Telam<sup>2</sup> towards Shur, as far as the land of Egypt. And every time that David raided their land he left neither man nor woman alive, but carried off sheep and cattle, asses and camels, and clothing; and returned with them to Achish. If Achish then asked, "°Where° have you made a raid to-day?" David would answer, "On the Negeb of Judah," or, "On the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites," or, "On the Negeb of the Kenites." David's reason for sparing neither man nor woman to bring home to Achish was his fear that they might give information against him and his men. °Thus David acted,° and this was his custom all the time he stayed in the country of the Philistines. So Achish trusted David, thinking "He has brought himself into disfavour with his countrymen of Israel; now he will remain my vassal for ever."

(2) *David narrowly escapes having to fight against his own Country* (xxviii. 1, 2; xxix).

At this time the Philistines mustered their forces for war against Israel. Achish said to David, "You understand that you and your men take the field with me in the army." "Quite so!" replied David, "°now° you shall see what your servant can do." "Good!" said Achish, "for this I make you <sup>3</sup>head of my bodyguard<sup>3</sup> permanently."

So the Philistines brought their whole force together at Aphek, while the Israelites encamped at the well in Jezreel. Now as the Tyrants<sup>4</sup> of the Philistines marched past with their

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> MT "Geshurites and the."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So MSS of LXX; MT "from of old."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Lit. "keeper of my head."

<sup>4</sup> See note 4, p.19.



companies and regiments, David and his men bringing up the rear under Achish, the Philistine officers said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish answered them, "Why, this is David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me for a year or °two°; and I have found nothing amiss in him from the day he joined °me° till now." But the Philistine officers got angry with him, and said, "Send the man back! Let him return to the quarters you have assigned to him; but he shall not go into battle with us, or he will <sup>1</sup>play the traitor to us<sup>1</sup> in the battle. What better way could such a man find to ingratiate himself with his sovereign than with the heads of these men of ours? Do you forget that this is the David of whom they used to sing in dances:

‘Saul has slain his thousands,  
David his tens of thousands’? ”

So Achish called David, and said to him, "As Yahweh lives, I believe in your honour, and it would please me well if you could go in and out with me in the camp; for I have found no fault in you from the time you came to me to this day. But you are not in favour with the Tyrants. So now turn back, and go away peaceably, and do not give offence to the Tyrants of the Philistines." David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service till now, that I may not come with you and fight against the enemies of your majesty?" Achish answered, "°You° know that in my eyes you are good as the Angel of God! Only, the Philistine officers have said that you must not go into battle with them. So now you will get up early in the morning, you and the servants of your sovereign who have come with you, <sup>2</sup>and go to the place I have assigned to you. Cherish no ill-will in your heart—for I esteem you highly<sup>2</sup>—but just rise in the morning as soon as it is light, and go away." So David and his men rose early in the morning, to depart for the land of the Philistines; while the Philistines moved up to Jezreel.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Lit. "be a Satan to us."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Inserted from LXX, etc.



(3) *David punishes the Amalekites for the Sack of Ziklag* (xxx.).

By the time David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negeb [and Ziklag], and had sacked Ziklag and burned it. They had made captives of the women <sup>1</sup>and all<sup>1</sup> who were in it, young and old, not killing any of them, but carrying them off when they departed. So David and his men came to the city, only to find it burned to the ground, and their wives, sons and daughters carried into captivity; and they broke into loud lamentations, and wept till they could weep no more. [David's two wives had been taken captive—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.] David now found himself in a very difficult position; for his followers spoke of stoning him, in the bitterness of their grief for their sons and daughters. But David kept his courageous trust in Yahweh his God; and said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring the ephod<sup>2</sup> to me here!" When Abiathar had done so, David put the question to Yahweh, "Shall I pursue this horde? Can I overtake them?" Yahweh answered, "Pursue them; for you will certainly overtake them and recover your property."

So David set out with the 600 men he had, and came to the watercourse of Besor ° °. Thence he continued the pursuit with 400 men, leaving behind 200 who were too exhausted to cross the watercourse. Then they found an Egyptian lying on the plain and brought him to David. They gave him some bread and water and a piece of fig-cake<sup>3</sup> and two bunches of raisins<sup>3</sup>; and when he had eaten he revived; for he had been without food or water for three days and three nights. David then asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?" and he answered, "I am an Egyptian youth, the slave of an Amalekite, and my master abandoned me because I was taken ill three days ago. We had made an incursion into the Negeb of the Crethi [and that which belongs to Judah], and the Negeb of the Calebites; and we burned down Ziklag." David said to him, "Will you guide me to these robbers?" He answered, "If you will swear to me by God

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Omitted in LXX.

that you will neither kill me nor give me up to my master, I will guide you to them."

When he had guided him down to them, there they were, spread over the whole country-side, eating and drinking and merrymaking, on account of the huge spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and Judah. So David routed them from dawn to evening, °and put them to the ban°; so that none escaped except 400 young men who were mounted on camels and fled. Thus David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken [also he recovered his two wives]; and nothing was missing whether of the spoil or the sons and daughters, or anything they had taken—it was all brought back by David. °They° took all the sheep and cattle, °and drove them before him,¹ crying, "This is David's booty."

When David returned to the 200 men who had been left behind at the watercourse of Besor because they were too exhausted to follow him, they came out to meet David and his company, and ²as they drew near the army they saluted them.² But all the ill-disposed and worthless men among those who had gone with David spoke up and said, "Since these men did not go with us we will not give them any of the spoil we have recovered, except to each his wife and children; let them take these and go!" But David said, "You shall not act so, ³after³ Yahweh has given us so much, and preserved us, and delivered into our hand the horde that attacked us. Who would agree with you in this? No! The share of him who goes into battle shall be the same as his who remains to guard the baggage: they shall divide equally!" And so it has been ever since: he made it law and custom in Israel to this day.

When David came to Ziklag he sent part of the spoil to the elders of Judah °and° to his friends, with the message, "A present for you from the spoil of Yahweh's enemies!" He did so to those in ⁴Bethuel,⁴ in °Ramah° of the Negeb, in Jattir,

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1—1 MT "they drove them before those cattle."

2—2 So LXX partly; MT "David drew near the people with a friendly greeting."

3—3 LXX.

4—4 See 1 Chr. iv. 30; MT "Bethel."

in 'Aṣara' (ṭ), in Siphemoth, in Eshtemoa, in <sup>2</sup>Carmel,<sup>2</sup> in the cities of the Jerahmeelites and Kenites, in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, and in Hebron—and to all the places where David and his men had sojourned.

(4) *Saul and the Witch of Endor* (xxviii. 3-25).

*This passage interrupts the natural connection between xxviii. 2 and xxix. 1 ; and must be derived from a different source.*

By this time Samuel had died ; all Israel had gone into mourning for him, and had buried him in his city of Ramah. [Saul, moreover, had suppressed the necromancers and soothsayers throughout the land.]<sup>3</sup>

The Philistines now assembled their forces and entered the land, and encamped in Shunem ; while Saul called all Israel together and pitched his camp on Gilboa. But when Saul saw the camp of the Philistines his heart trembled with fear. He tried to consult Yahweh, but Yahweh gave him no answer, either by dream or by priestly oracle, or by prophet. Saul then commanded his servants to seek out a woman who could conjure up the dead, that he might go and consult her. His servants said to him, "There is such a woman at Endor."

Saul then, having disguised himself and put on other clothes, set out with two attendants, and came to the woman by night, and said to her, "Conjure for me by your ghost, and bring up some one whom I shall name." But the woman answered, "Surely you know what Saul has done—how he has hunted down the necromancers and soothsayers in the land ! Why do you lay a trap for me, to bring about my death ?" Saul then swore to her : "As Yahweh lives, there shall no punishment fall on you in this case." The woman then asked, "Whom do you wish me to call up ?" and Saul answered, "Call me up Samuel." But when the woman saw <sup>4</sup>Samuel<sup>4</sup> she screamed out and

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> See Josh. xv. 22.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So LXX ; MT "Rachal.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps added by an editor in view of v. 9.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Some read "Saul," with a few MSS of LXX.

said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me, when you are Saul himself?" The king answered, "Do not be afraid! What have you seen?" She said, "I saw a spirit<sup>1</sup> rising out of the earth." "What is he like?" "It is an old man coming up, wrapped in a mantle." Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and bowed with his face to the ground in reverence.

Samuel said, addressing Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by calling me up?" Saul replied, "I am in sore distress! The Philistines are attacking me; God has thrown me off, and no longer answers me, either by prophet or by dream. Therefore I have called you, hoping you would show me what I should do." Samuel said, "But why do you ask me, when Yahweh has forsaken you and become your 'enemy'? Yahweh has done to 'you' what he threatened through me: he has torn the kingdom from you and given it to another, to David. Because you disobeyed the command of Yahweh, and failed to execute his fierce wrath on Amalek, therefore has Yahweh done this to you to-day. [And Yahweh will deliver Israel also, as well as you, into the hand of the Philistines; and] To-morrow you and your sons will be with me; Yahweh will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." At this Saul, <sup>2</sup>in utter despair,<sup>2</sup> fell full length on the ground, completely terrified by the words of Samuel; and indeed he had no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all night.

Then the woman approached Saul, and seeing that he was quite unmanned, she said to him: "Listen! Your handmaid has complied with your request: I have risked my life in obeying the command you laid upon me; now do you be prevailed on by me, and let me tempt you with a morsel of food, that you may eat, and have strength to resume your journey." But he refused and said, "I will not eat." But when urged by his servants, as well as the woman, he yielded to their persuasion, and rose from the ground, and seated himself on the bed. Now the woman

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<sup>1</sup> Lit. "a god."

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX; MT "hastily."

had a stall-fed calf in the house, and she hastily killed it ; then she got some meal and kneaded it, and baked unleavened cakes. This she set before Saul and his attendants ; and after they had eaten they rose and went their way the same night.

(5) *Saul's Last Battle* (xxxi.).

Meanwhile<sup>1</sup> the Philistines °had joined° battle with Israel ; the Israelites had been put to flight by the Philistines ; and the slain lay thick on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines pressed hard on Saul and his sons ; they killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. Fiercely the battle raged against Saul, till the archers ° ° found him, and <sup>2</sup>he was wounded in the abdomen.<sup>3</sup> Then Saul said to his armour-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through with it, lest these uncircumcised dogs come °and° make sport of me." But the armour-bearer was too much afraid to do it, and refused ; so Saul took his own sword and threw himself upon it. When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also threw himself on his sword, and died by his side. Thus died Saul and his three sons and his armour-bearer <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> together on the same day. And when the Israelites <sup>4</sup>in the cities<sup>4</sup> of the valley (of Jezreel), and <sup>4</sup>in those<sup>4</sup> on the Jordan saw that the army of Israel had fled, and Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled ; and the Philistines came and occupied them.

On the morrow the Philistines came to strip the slain, and found Saul and his three sons lying on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head and stripped off his armour ; and sent them round the Philistine territory, to carry the good news to <sup>5</sup> <sup>5</sup> their idols and their people. They put Saul's armour in the temple of Astarte ; and his body they °hung° on the wall of Bethshean.

But when the citizens of Jabesh in Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, they arose, every fighting man of

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<sup>1</sup> Referring back to ch. xxx.

<sup>2—2</sup> So LXX ; MT "he was in anguish from the archers."

<sup>3—3</sup> MT "also all his men" ; not in LXX.

<sup>4—4</sup> MT "on the other side" (twice) ; omitted in 1 Chron. x. 7).

<sup>5—5</sup> So LXX, etc. (see 1 Chron. x. 9) ; MT inserts "the temple of."

them, and after marching all night they took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Bethshean, and 'brought them' to Jabesh ; <sup>2</sup>and burned them there.<sup>2</sup> Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk-tree<sup>3</sup> in Jabesh ; and fasted seven days.

(6) *How David received the Tidings of Saul's Death* (2 Sam. i. 1-16).

*In these verses two narratives seem to be mixed up, of which the first (in vv. 1-4, 11, 12) gives an account of the battle quite consistent with the preceding chapter. The second gives an entirely different account of Saul's death (vv. 6-10), (agreeing, however, with 2 Sam. iv. 9, 10) ; and as there is no hint that the story told by the Amalekite is a lie, we must suppose that it embodies another tradition regarding the manner of Saul's death. We may divide them as follows :—*

A. i. (vv. 1-4 ; 11, 12).

On the third day after Saul's death, when David had returned from his defeat of the Amalekites, and had spent two days in Ziklag, there came a man from the camp [from Saul], with his clothes torn and earth on his head. When he came to David, he threw himself on the ground and did homage to him. David said to him, "Where have you come from ?" and he answered, "I am a fugitive from the camp of Israel." "How have things gone ?" asked David, "Tell me, pray." He said, "Our people have fled from the battle-field ; many of the soldiers have fallen ; Saul also and his son Jonathan are dead." Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, as did all the men that were with him. And they wailed and wept and fasted till the evening, for Saul and his son Jonathan, and the people of Yahweh <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> because they had fallen by the sword.

B. ii. (vv. 5-10 ; 13-16).

\* \* \* \* David said to the young man who had brought the news, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead ?" The youth replied, "By mere

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So 1 Chron. x. 12 ; LXX, etc.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Omitted in 1 Chr. x. Some would read "and wailed for them there."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chr. x. 12 "terebinth."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> MT adds "and the house of Israel."

“chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there I found Saul leaning on his spear, while the chariots and ° ° horsemen pressed closely on him. Turning round and seeing me, he called me ; and I answered, ‘What is it ?’ He then asked me who I was, and I said, ‘I am an Amalekite.’ Then he said, ‘Stand over me, and kill me outright ; for the death-throes are on me, although my soul is still whole within me.’ So I stood over him and despatched him ; for I knew that he could not survive his fall. And I took the diadem from his head, and the armlet from his arm, and have brought them here to my lord.’”

David then asked the young man who had brought the news, “Where do you come from ?” to which he answered, “I am an Amalekite—the son of a protected guest.” Said David, “What ? Were you not afraid to raise your hand to slay the anointed of Yahweh ?” Then, calling on one of his soldiers, he said, “Here ! Strike him down !” So the soldier struck him dead. David said to him, “Your blood be on your own head ; for your own mouth gave evidence against you when you said, ‘It was I who killed the anointed of Yahweh.’”

(7) *David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan* (i. 17-27).

David composed the following elegy on Saul and his son Jonathan—[it is contained in the Book of Jashar, that the sons of Judah might learn it].<sup>1</sup> He said :—

°Alas° for thy chivalry, Israel !  
 On thy heights it lies slain.  
 How are the heroes fallen  
 ° In the thick of the battle !<sup>2</sup>

Make it not known in Gath,  
 Nor tell it in Ashkelon's streets ;  
 Lest Philistia's daughters rejoice—  
 The girls of the heathen<sup>3</sup> make merry !

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<sup>1</sup> Transposing the order of clauses, and (with LXX) omitting the word “bow.”

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> A line added from v. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Strictly “uncircumcised.”



Ye hills of Gilboa ! Nor dew descend,  
Nor rain fall on you, <sup>1</sup>ye fields of death !<sup>1</sup>  
For there was the heroes' shield defiled—<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>The weapons of one anointed<sup>3</sup> with oil—  
With the blood of the slain, the fat of the mighty!

Bow of Jonathan ne'er turned back,  
Nor sword of Saul came empty home.  
Saul and Jonathan ! The loved and the lovely !  
In death, as in life, unsevered :  
Than eagles more swift, than lions more strong !

Ye daughters of Israel ! Weep for Saul,  
Who clothed you in purple and °silk° ;  
Who braided your raiment with gold.

How are the heroes fallen  
In the thick of the fight !  
<sup>4</sup>Jonathan on thy heights is slain !<sup>4</sup>

I am grieved for thee, O Jonathan, brother !  
Right dear wert thou to me.  
Thy love to me was wonderful,  
More than the love of woman.

How are the heroes fallen,—  
Perished the weapons of war !

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Or, "ye fields of deceit" ; both being emendations of MT.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> MT adds "the shield of Saul."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> MT has a negative particle (a difference of one letter), i.e., "of one not anointed."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Text uncertain. Luc., etc., read "Jonathan, thou art wounded to death" ; which might easily be emended to "Jonathan, I grieve for thy death,"—a possible variant of the next line.



### III. DAVID.

(2 Sam. ii.-xxiv.)

#### I. DAVID AS KING OF JUDAH (ii. 1-v. 5).

##### (1) *His Anointing in Hebron* (ii. 1-7).

After this David inquired of Yahweh : " Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah ? " Yahweh's response being favourable, David asked, " To which city ? " and the answer was " To Hebron." To Hebron accordingly David went up, with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. The men of his company he brought up also, each with his family ; and they settled in the cities round Hebron. Then the men of Judah came and anointed David there as king over the house of Judah.

On hearing that the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead had buried Saul, David sent envoys to the rulers<sup>1</sup> of that city with this message : " The blessing of Yahweh be on you for this gracious service you have rendered to your master Saul by burying him ! May Yahweh show you constant favour ; and I on my part will requite you with benefits °for° having done this thing. Now then, take courage, and be brave men ; though your master Saul is dead, the house of Judah have anointed me as king over them."

##### (2) *The Contest between David and Eshbaal* (ii. 8-iv. 12).

###### (a) ii. 8-11. *Eshbaal crowned at Mahanaim.*

Now Abner the son of Ner, Saul's commander-in-chief, had taken Eshbaal,<sup>2</sup> Saul's son, and brought him over to Mahanaim, where he made him king over Gilead and Asher,<sup>3</sup> Jezreel, Ephraim and Benjamin : that is to say over all Israel ; <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> only the house of Judah acknowledged David. <sup>5</sup> <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LXX ; MT " men."

<sup>2</sup> MT " Ishbosheth " ; and so throughout. The original name is preserved in 1 Chr. viii. 39. For the word Baal, on account of its heathenish associations, the scribes substituted a word meaning " shameful thing."

<sup>3</sup> MT " the Ashurites."

<sup>4-4</sup> V. 10a : " Forty years old was Eshbaal, Saul's son, when he became King over Israel ; and he reigned two years."

<sup>5-5</sup> V. 11 : " The time that David reigned over the house of Judah in Hebron was seven years and six months."

(b) ii. 12-iii. 1. *The Battle of Gibeon.*

Then Abner the son of Ner set out from Mahanaim with the soldiers of Eshbaal, Saul's son, °and came° to Gibeon; while Joab the son of Zeruiah with David's men marched out <sup>1</sup>from Hebron.<sup>1</sup> The two armies met at the pool of Gibeon ° ° and halted, one on this side of the pool and the other on that. Said Abner to Joab, "Let the lads stand up, and show us some warlike sport." "Agreed!" said Joab. So there stood up and were told off by number twelve from Benjamin, belonging to Eshbaal the son of Saul, and twelve of David's men. Then each man seized his opponent by the hair of his head <sup>2</sup>with one hand,<sup>2</sup> and with the other plunged his sword in his opponent's side, so that they fell dead together. Hence that place was named "The field of Sides<sup>3</sup>" (?), which is at Gibeon.

In the fierce battle that ensued that day, Abner and the men of Israel were worsted by David's soldiers. Now there were three sons of Zeruiah, Joab, Abishai and Asahel; and Asahel was fleet-footed as any gazelle in the wilds. Asahel, then, pursued Abner, never swerving from his track to right or left. So Abner turned round and said, "Are you Asahel?" He answered, "I am." Abner then said, "Turn off to the right or left, and seize one of the fighting men, and take his arms." But Asahel would not give up the pursuit. Again Abner spoke to him, "Leave off following me; else I will strike you to the ground; and how could I then look your brother Joab in the face?" As he still refused to draw off, Abner dealt him °a backward stroke° through the abdomen, so that the spear came out behind; and Asahel fell and died on the spot. [And all who came up to the place where Asahel had fallen and died stood still.]

Joab and Abishai now took up the pursuit of Abner. But at sunset, as they reached the hill of Ammah, on the east ° ° of the road in the wilderness of Geba<sup>4</sup>, the Benjamites closed in behind Abner, forming a solid body, and halted on the top of

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Inserted with Luc., etc.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Added with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> An uncertain word. MT "of rocks" (or "flints").

<sup>4</sup> MT "Gibeon."

<sup>1</sup>the hill of Ammah.<sup>1</sup> Thence Abner called to Joab, "Must the sword devour for ever? Do you not know that the after-taste will be bitter? Will you not at last call off the people from pursuing their brothers?" Joab answered, "As Yahweh<sup>2</sup> lives, but for this word of yours, morning should have dawned before the people had desisted from the pursuit of their brothers." So Joab then blew a trumpet, and his whole army halted, and did not pursue the Israelites further, or renew the fight. But Abner and his men marched through the Jordan-valley all that night, crossing the Jordan and traversing the whole length of <sup>3</sup>the Gorge<sup>3</sup>, till they reached Mahanaim. And Joab, having abandoned the pursuit of Abner, gathered his forces together, when it was found that of David's soldiers nineteen men were missing, besides Asahel; while they had slain of the Benjamites and the people of Abner 360 men. ° ° Then, taking up the body of Asahel (which they afterwards buried in his father's grave at Bethlehem), Joab and his men marched the whole night, and entered Hebron just as morning broke.

But the war between Saul's house and ° ° David lasted a long time; David growing constantly stronger, and Saul's house weaker. <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup>

(c) iii. 6-11. *The Quarrel between Abner and Eshbaal.*

Now during the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was constantly gaining influence in the house of Saul. But there was a former concubine of Saul's, named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and with reference to her, Eshbaal<sup>5</sup> said to Abner, "What do you mean by cohabiting with my father's concubine?" Abner was greatly incensed by this question of Eshbaal's, and retorted, "Am I then a dog's head [of Judah]<sup>6</sup>?—I who this day am showing my good-will to the house of Saul, and to his relatives and friends, and have kept you from falling into the

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> MT "a certain hill" (perhaps rightly).

<sup>2</sup> So LXX, etc. MT "God."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> "Bithron"—found only here.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Vv. 2-5, on p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Not in LXX.

hand of David ? You would rake up against me a scandal about a woman at this time of day ! May God do his worst to Abner if I do not bring about for David <sup>1</sup>this day<sup>1</sup> what Yahweh has sworn to him—to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba !” Eshbaal dared not say another word to Abner ; so much did he fear him.

(d) iii. 12-21. *Negotiations between Abner and David.*

Abner sent messengers forthwith to David <sup>2</sup>at Hebron<sup>2</sup> to say, [“ Whose is the land ? ” saying] “ Make an agreement with me, and my influence is at your disposal to bring all Israel round to you.” David answered, “ Very good ! I will make an agreement with you ; only, one condition I impose on you : you shall not see my face unless <sup>3</sup>you bring<sup>3</sup> Michal, Saul’s daughter, with you when you come to see me.” At the same time David sent messengers to Eshbaal, Saul’s son, to say, “ Give up my wife Michal, whom I betrothed at the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins.” So Eshbaal sent and took her from <sup>o</sup>her<sup>o</sup> husband Paltiel, the son of Laish. Her husband accompanied her as far as Bahurim, weeping all the way ; but there Abner ordered him back, and he returned.

Meanwhile Abner had conferred with the elders of Israel, and put the situation before them thus : “ For a long time back you have been desirous of having David as king over you. Now then, carry it out ; for Yahweh has given this promise to David, ‘ By my servant David <sup>o</sup>I<sup>o</sup> will deliver my people Israel from the Philistines and from all their enemies.’ ” He also spoke in the same sense to the Benjamites. Finally, he set out for Hebron to acquaint David personally with the wish of the Israelites and of the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David at Hebron, accompanied by twenty men ; and David made a banquet for them. At the close Abner said to David, “ I will now set about gathering all Israel to my lord the king. They will enter into a covenant with you ; and you shall reign as widely as your heart could wish.” David then dismissed Abner, and he departed in safety.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So Luc. M<sup>t</sup> “ instead of him,” or “ where he was.”

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> LXX.

(c) iii. 22-39. *The Death of Abner.*

Just then David's men under Joab came in from a foray, bringing much spoil with them. Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, but had been dismissed by David, and had gone away safely. So when Joab and the troop that was with him came in, Joab was told that Abner the son of Ner had been to the king, who had let him go unharmed. Joab went straight to the king and said, "What is this you have done? Abner has come to you, has he? Why have you let him get <sup>1</sup>safely away? Do you not<sup>1</sup> know Abner the son of Ner—that he only came to deceive you, to find out your going and coming, and spy out all you are doing?"

Joab then went out from David's presence, and sent messengers after Abner, and brought him back from the <sup>2</sup>cistern of Sirah<sup>2</sup>, without David's knowledge. So Abner came back to Hebron, and Joab led him apart to the side<sup>3</sup> of the gateway, as if to speak with him quietly; and there he stabbed him fatally in the abdomen, in revenge for the blood of his brother Asahel. When David heard of this afterwards he exclaimed, "I and my kingdom are for ever guiltless before Yahweh of the blood of Abner, the son of Ner. May it recoil on the head of Joab, and all his father's house! May there never fail from Joab's house one that suffers from flux or leprosy, or <sup>4</sup>leans on a crutch<sup>4</sup>, or falls by the sword, or is in want of bread!" [Joab and Abishai <sup>5</sup>had lain in wait for<sup>5</sup> Abner, because he had slain Asahel their brother, in the battle at Gibeon.]

David then commanded Joab and all the people about him to tear their clothes and put on sackcloth, and wail before Abner; while king David himself walked behind the bier. Thus they buried Abner in Hebron, the king weeping aloud over his grave; and all the people wept likewise. The king chanted the funeral dirge for Abner, as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Or Bor-Sirah.

<sup>3</sup> LXX; MT "middle."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> LXX; MT "holds the distaff" (?).

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> LXX; MT "killed."

Should Abner have died the death of a fool ?

Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put in fetters !

As one falls before knaves thou'rt fallen !

And again the whole assembly wept. And when all the people came to urge David to eat in the daytime, David swore, " May God punish me if before sundown I taste bread or food of any kind ! " When all the people took note of this they were pleased ; indeed, all that the king had done made a good impression on the people. For thus [all the people and] all Israel understood that day that it was not with the king's will that Abner, the son of Ner, had met his death. To his courtiers, moreover, the king said, " Know you that 'a great chieftain'<sup>1</sup> in Israel has fallen to-day ? And I, though an anointed king, am broken-hearted this day ; but these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too cruel for me. May Yahweh requite him who has committed the crime as his crime deserves ! "

(f) iv. *The Assassination of Eshbaal.*

When °Eshbaal° the son of Saul heard of Abner's death in Hebron, he lost all courage, and all Israel was dismayed. Now °Eshbaal° had two men who were leaders of guerilla-bands ; one named Baanah, and the other Rechab, both sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, of the Benjamites. (For Beeroth used to be reckoned as Benjamite ; but the Beerothites fled to Girtaim, where they have dwelt as protected guests to this day. <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup>) These sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, then, Rechab and Baanah, came to Eshbaal's house at the hottest time of the day, when he was taking his noontide siesta. <sup>3</sup> And finding that the woman who kept the gate of the house (who had been sifting wheat) had fallen fast asleep over her task,<sup>3</sup> Rechab and Baanah his brother slipped past, and entered the house where Eshbaal lay asleep on his bed in the bedchamber. So they attacked and killed him, and cut off his head, and took it with them. Then, travelling all night by the way of the Jordan-valley, they brought Eshbaal's head to David at Hebron, and said to the king, " Here is the head of Eshbaal, Saul's son, your enemy who sought your

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> V. 4 out of place here, probably belongs to ch. ix. See p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX ; M'T gives no sense.

life ; Yahweh has wrought vengeance for my lord the king this day on Saul and his offspring.” But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, “As Yahweh lives, who has saved my life from every danger, when a man announced to me that Saul was dead, thinking that he brought me welcome tidings, I seized and slew him in Ziklag, as my reward for his good news ! How, then, should I act when ruthless men have murdered an honest man in his own house on his bed ? Should I not require his blood at your hands, and destroy you from the earth ? ” David then gave the order to his men, who slew them, cut off their hands and feet, and hung them up by the pool in Hebron. But the head of Eshbaal they took and buried in Abner’s grave in Hebron.

(3) *David anointed King of Israel* (v. 1-5).

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, “Look ! We are of your bone and flesh. Long ago, when Saul was our king, it was you who used to lead out Israel to battle and bring it home again. And Yahweh has given you this promise, ‘It is you who shall shepherd my people Israel, and you who shall be prince over Israel.’ ” So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron ; and king David made a covenant with them before Yahweh. Then they anointed David king of Israel.

[David was thirty years old at his accession, and reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over both Israel and Judah.]

*A list of David’s sons born in Hebron* (iii. 2-5). The following sons were born to David in Hebron : his firstborn Amnon, to Ahinoam of Jezreel ; his second Chileab, to Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite ; the third Absalom, son of Maachah, daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur ; the fourth Adonijah, son of Haggith ; the fifth Shephatiah, son of Abital ; and the sixth Jithream, to Eglah, wife of \* \* \*<sup>1</sup> (?). These were born to David in Hebron.

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<sup>1</sup> MT inserts “David” ; but it is probable that the name of a former husband of Eglah stood here originally.



## 2. DAVID AS KING OF ALL ISRAEL (v. 6-viii. 17).

### (1) *David captures Jerusalem and makes it his Residence* (v. 6-12).

The king then marched with his men to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the native inhabitants of the land. Some one said to David, "You cannot get in there <sup>1</sup>except you remove the blind and the lame<sup>1</sup> (?)"; meaning, "David cannot get in there!" Nevertheless David captured the fort of Zion [which became the city of David]. On that day David said, "Everyone who smites a Jebusite <sup>2</sup>\* \* \* <sup>2</sup> and the lame and the blind, who are heartily hated by David." Hence the maxim that no blind man or cripple may enter the house of Yahweh. David then took up his residence in the citadel, and named it the "City of David," building <sup>3</sup>the city<sup>3</sup> proper round it from the Millo inwards (?). David's power steadily increased, and Yahweh, God of Zebaoth, was with him. Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent ambassadors to David, and along with them cedar-wood, carpenters, and stone-masons<sup>4</sup>; and they built a palace for David. Thus David perceived that Yahweh had confirmed his kingship over Israel, and had exalted his realm for his people Israel's sake.

*David's sons born in Jerusalem* (v. 13-16). David took other concubines and wives in Jerusalem after he had come thither from Hebron, and had sons and daughters born to him. The names of the sons born to him in Jerusalem are these: Shammua, Shohab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

### (2) *Victories over the Philistines* (v. 17-25).

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over °all° Israel, they came up in full force to seize David; and David, hearing of this, went down to the fastness. When the Philistines came, they spread themselves over the plain of

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Or, "but the blind and the lame will remove you." Neither rendering gives an intelligible sense.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> The omitted words are utterly obscure, and the whole context presents insoluble difficulties.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX, and 1 Chr. xi. 8; MT "David."

<sup>4</sup> MT here inserts the word "wall" (not in LXX). See 1 Chr. xiv. 1.



Rephaim ; and David inquired of Yahweh, " Shall I advance against the Philistines ? Wilt thou deliver them into my hand ? " Yahweh answered, " Yes ! I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand." So David came to Baal-Perazim, and defeated them there. Then he exclaimed, " Yahweh has burst through my enemies before me, like the bursting of water through a dam " ; hence the place is called Baal-Perazim (= " Lord of Burstings "). There, too, the Philistines left their idols,<sup>1</sup> which David and his men carried off.

Once again the Philistines came up, and spread themselves over the plain of Rephaim. But when David inquired of Yahweh as before, the answer was, " Do not <sup>2</sup>attack them in front<sup>2</sup>, but make a circuit to their rear, and attack them opposite the balsam-trees. When you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the balsam-trees, then charge quickly ; for Yahweh will have gone forth before you to make havoc in the camp of the Philistines." David acted in accordance with these instructions of Yahweh, and routed the Philistines from Gibeon<sup>3</sup> to near Gezer.

### (3) *The Removal of the Ark to Jerusalem* (vi.).

David [again] °assembled° all the fighting men of Israel, to the number of 30,000 ; and he and all his people set out °for° Baalah in Judah, in order to bring up thence the ark of God, which bears the name of Yahweh Zebaoth, who sits enthroned upon the cherubim. Setting the ark of God on a new cart, they bore it from the house of Abinadab on the hill. Uzza and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, guided the cart, <sup>4</sup>Uzza walking<sup>4</sup> beside the ark, while Ahio went in front of it. David and all the house of Israel were dancing before Yahweh with all <sup>5</sup>their might, and singing<sup>5</sup> to the accompaniment of guitars, harps, tambourines, bells (?) and cymbals. But when they reached

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<sup>1</sup> LXX and 1 Chr. xiv, 12, " gods."

<sup>2—2</sup> Inserting a word with LXX.

<sup>3</sup> So LXX and 1 Chr. xiv. 16 ; MT " Geba."

<sup>4—4</sup> These two words have been displaced in MT by a senseless repetition which is not in LXX.

<sup>5—5</sup> So 1 Chr. xiii. 8 ; MT " cyprus-trees."

the threshing-floor of Nachon,<sup>1</sup> Uzza put out <sup>2</sup>his hand<sup>2</sup> and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen were restive.<sup>3</sup> Then Yahweh's wrath was kindled against Uzza; and there God smote him <sup>4</sup>for laying his hand on the ark<sup>4</sup>; and he died on the spot beside the ark of God. David was <sup>°</sup>greatly troubled<sup>°</sup> because of Yahweh's outbreak on Uzza, and he called the place Perez-Uzza (=“Outbreak on Uzza”)—the name it bears to this day. Such fear of Yahweh fell on David that day that he said, “How can the ark of Yahweh come to me?” So, being unwilling to remove the ark of Yahweh into the city of David, he left it in the house of Obed-Edom of Gath. Thus the ark of Yahweh remained for three months in the house of Obed-Edom of Gath, and Yahweh blessed Obed-Edom and all his family.

When king David heard that Yahweh had blessed the household and all the possessions of Obed-Edom for the sake of the ark of God, he went and brought up the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to David's city amid great rejoicings. When the bearers of the ark had advanced six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. David kept dancing before Yahweh round and round, with all his might, clad only in a linen ephod.<sup>5</sup> Thus David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Yahweh, with shouting and blowing of trumpets. And as the ark of Yahweh entered the city of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looking from the window, saw king David leaping and dancing around before Yahweh, and secretly despised him. After they had brought in the ark of Yahweh, and set it in its place in the tent which David had prepared for it, David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before Yahweh; and having finished offering them he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh Zebaoth. Afterwards he distributed to all the people—to the whole multitude of Israel, men and women—to each a cake of bread, a \* \* \* (?), and a raisin-cake. Then all the people went to their homes.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Chr. xiii. 9 “Chidon.”

<sup>2—2</sup> So Chron. and versions.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning uncertain.

<sup>4—4</sup> So 1 Chr. xiii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 13.

When David came home to greet his family, Michal, Saul's daughter, came out to meet him with this for welcome : " Much honour has the king of Israel gained to-day, exposing himself before the slave-girls of his subjects, as any vulgar fellow might expose himself ! " To this David answered, " ' I will dance<sup>1</sup> before Yahweh, who chose me in preference to your father, and all his house, by appointing me leader of Yahweh's people Israel. And I will play before Yahweh ; and although I demean myself still further, and become utterly contemptible in your<sup>2</sup> eyes, yet by the slave-girls of whom you speak I shall be held in honour.' " And Michal, Saul's daughter, had no child to the day of her death.

(4) *David's Wish to build a Temple* (vii.).

Now after the king had taken up his abode in his palace,<sup>3</sup> when Yahweh had given him rest from his enemies on every side,<sup>3</sup> he said one day to Nathan the prophet, " Here am I sitting in a cedar palace, while the ark of God remains under tent-curtains ! " Nathan answered, " Carry out what you have in your mind ; for Yahweh is with you."

But that night Yahweh's word came to Nathan as follows : " Go and say to my servant David, ' Thus speaks Yahweh : Is it for you to build a house for me to dwell in ? Nay ! I have not dwelt in any house from the time when I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt to this day, but have moved about in tent and tabernacle. Have I ever, in all my wanderings among the Israelites, spoken to any of the Judges<sup>4</sup> of Israel whom I appointed to shepherd my people<sup>5</sup>, a word like this : ' Why have you not built me a house of cedar ? ' " "

"<sup>5</sup>Now, therefore, this is the word you must speak to my servant David : Thus says Yahweh Zebaoth : ' I took you from the pastures where you followed the flock to make you leader of my people Israel. I have been with you in

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Inserted from Luc.

<sup>2</sup> LXX ; MT " my own."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> These words are wanting in 1 Chr. xvii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> So 1 Chr. xvii. 6 ; MT " tribes."

<sup>5</sup> The remainder of the chapter bears marks of later style, and is probably an expansion of the older narrative.

all that you have undertaken, and have cut off all your enemies before you. I will make your name equal to that of the greatest potentates on earth ; and will assign to my people Israel a dwelling-place, planting it so that it shall dwell there undisturbed, and no longer be oppressed by cruel men as it has been ever since I appointed Judges over my people Israel ; and will give °it° rest from all °its° enemies.' [And Yahweh 'will make you great ; for<sup>1</sup> he will build a house for you.] ' When your days are numbered and you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring, the issue of your body, after you, and establish their kingdom. [He shall build a house for my name, and I will confirm the throne of his kingdom for ever.]<sup>2</sup> I will be a father to them, and they shall be my sons, so that when they transgress I will chastise them with humane and lenient strokes ; but °I will not withdraw° my mercy from them, as I did <sup>3</sup>from your predecessor<sup>3</sup> Saul. Your house and kingdom shall be stedfast before me<sup>4</sup> for ever ; your throne shall be established for all time.' ” In accordance with these words and this whole revelation, Nathan spoke to David.

Then king David went in and seated himself before Yahweh, and said : “ Who am I, O Lord Yahweh, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far ? And as if this were too little for thee, Lord Yahweh, thou hast spoken even of thy servant's house in a distant future, and hast <sup>5</sup>let me see many generations of men<sup>5</sup>, O Lord Yahweh ! What more can David say to thee ? Thou knowest thy servant, O Lord Yahweh ! For thy servant's<sup>6</sup> sake hast thou acted according to thy mind, °in revealing to thy servant all this greatness.° Therefore art thou

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A slight emendation ; MT “ will tell you that.”

<sup>2</sup> *V.* 13 is at least a parenthesis, and most likely a later insertion.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So 1 Chr. xvii. 13 ; MT “ from Saul whom I removed from before you.”

<sup>4</sup> LXX, etc. ; MT “ you.”

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> Emended partly after 1 Chr. xvii. 17 ; MT “ this is the law for men ” (?).

<sup>6</sup> LXX and 1 Chr. xvii. 19 ; MT “ word's.”

great, O °Lord Yahweh°, for there is none like thee, nor is there a God besides thee, from all that our ears have heard. And what other<sup>1</sup> nation is there on earth like thy people Israel, whom a God has gone forth to redeem as a people for himself, and to make himself a name, by performing for °them great° and terrible deeds, °driving out° before °his° people <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> another nation with its gods? And thou hast established Israel as thy people for ever; and thou, Yahweh, art become their God.

And now, °Lord Yahweh°, the promise which thou hast made concerning thy servant and his house, do thou fulfil for all time, and do as thou hast spoken. Then shall thy name—Yahweh Zebaoth, God over Israel—be for ever glorious; and the house of thy servant David shall stand before thee. For thou, Yahweh Zebaoth, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant that thou wilt build him a house; wherefore thy servant has found courage to offer this prayer unto thee.

Now, therefore, O Lord Yahweh, thou art God, and thy words shall come true, and thou hast spoken concerning thy servant this good thing. Be pleased now to bless thy servant's house, that it may stand for ever before thee. For thou, Lord Yahweh, hast spoken; and through thy blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

(5) *Summary of David's Wars, and List of his Officials* (viii.).

After this David defeated and subjugated the Philistines, and wrested the supremacy<sup>3</sup> from their hands. He also defeated the Moabites; and making the prisoners lie down on the ground he measured them off with a line: two-thirds of them to be put to death, and one full third to be spared; and Moab became subject and tributary to David. Then he defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to <sup>4</sup>set up<sup>4</sup> his monument at the River Euphrates. David captured 1,700 horsemen

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<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT "one."

<sup>2—2</sup> MT adds "which thou hast redeemed for thyself from Egypt."

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "the bridle of the mother-city."

<sup>4—4</sup> LXX, etc.

from him and 20,000 footmen: he hamstrung all the chariot horses, reserving only 100. And when the Arameans of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 men of the Arameans. He then appointed lieutenant-governors in Aram of Damascus; and the Arameans became tributary subjects of David. Thus Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went.

David took the golden shields which Hadadezer's men had worn, and brought them to Jerusalem. From <sup>1</sup>Tebah<sup>1</sup> also and Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David obtained a great quantity of bronze. And when Tou, the king of Hamath, heard that David had routed the entire army of Hadadezer, he sent Hadoram<sup>2</sup> his son to king David to salute him, and congratulate him on his victorious battle with Hadadezer—for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou—sending with him articles of silver, gold and bronze. These also king David dedicated to Yahweh, along with the silver and the gold which he had dedicated, taken from all the nations he had conquered—from Edom<sup>3</sup>, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Amalekites, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

Thus David made himself a famous name. °And° as he returned from the defeat of the Arameans, <sup>4</sup>he slew of the Edomites<sup>4</sup> in the Salt-valley 18,000 men. He set up lieutenant-governors in Edom, ° ° and all Edom became subject to David. [Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went.]

So David reigned over all Israel, dispensing right and justice to all his subjects. Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was at the head of the army; and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the chancellor. <sup>5</sup>Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, and Zadok<sup>5</sup> were priests; and Seraiah (?) was secretary of State. Benaiah, the son

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Chr. xviii. 8; MT "Betah."

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chr. xviii. 10; MT "Joram."

<sup>3</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "Aram."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> A necessary addition.

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> Rearranging clauses and emending after Syr.

of Jehoiada, was 'over' the Crethi and Plethi.<sup>2</sup> David's sons were priests.

### 3. A HISTORY OF DAVID'S COURT (ix.-xx.).

*These chapters form a continuous narrative (continued in 1 Kings i., ii.) of the highest value both from a historical and a literary point of view. The writer's knowledge of David's affairs is based on first-hand information, and his graphic pen enables us to follow the course of events with engrossing interest.*

#### (1) *David and Meribaal* (ix.).

"Is there no one left of Saul's house," said David one day, "to whom I might show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Now there was a servant of Saul's house named Ziba; and him they summoned before David. The king asked him, "Are you Ziba?" and he answered, "Your servant!" Then the king said, "Is there any man of Saul's house still living, to whom I may show kindness in God's name?" Ziba replied, "There is still a son of Jonathan left, who is lame in both legs." <sup>3</sup>This son had been a child of five when the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; his nurse had taken him up as she fled; but in the hurry of her flight she let him fall, and he was lamed. His name was Meribaal.<sup>4,3</sup> So the king asked Ziba where he was, and Ziba said, "Why, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar." King David sent accordingly and fetched him from the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

When Meribaal, the son of Jonathan, and grandson of Saul, came to David, he fell on his face and did homage to him. David said, "Meribaal!" He answered, "Your servant is before you." David said to him, "Do not be afraid! I am to treat you kindly for the sake of Jonathan your father, and give you back all the estates of your grandfather Saul; while you yourself shall eat daily at my table." Meribaal bowed and said,

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So Versions and 1 Chr. xviii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign mercenaries in David's service.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> From iv. 4b.

<sup>4</sup> MT "Mephibosheth"; and so throughout. See the note on Eshbaal, p. 81. The original name in 1 Chr. viii. 34; ix. 40.



“What is your servant, that you should take notice of a dead dog such as I am ?”

The king then called Ziba, Saul's steward, and said to him, “All that belonged to Saul and his whole family, I have given to your master's son. You shall cultivate the fields for him, along with your sons and slaves, and bring in the produce, so that your master's family may have enough to eat. But Meribaal, your master's son, shall eat regularly at my table.”—Ziba, by the way, had fifteen sons and twenty slaves.—Said Ziba to the king, “Your servant will punctually carry out your Majesty's order.”

So Meribaal ate at <sup>1</sup>the royal table<sup>1</sup> as if he had been one of the king's sons. He had a young son named Micah, and all the inmates of Ziba's house were his slaves. [Thus Meribaal lived in Jerusalem, eating regularly at the king's table ; he being lame in both his legs.]

(2) *War against the Ammonites and Arameans* (x. 1-xi. 1).

Shortly after this the king of the Ammonites died, and was succeeded by his son Hanun ; and David thought, “I will make friendly advances to Hanun, the son of Nahash, in return for the friendship which his father showed to me.” So David sent ambassadors to condole with Hanun on the loss of his father. But when David's envoys came to the Ammonites' country the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their sovereign, “Do you suppose that it is out of respect for your father that David has sent messengers to condole with you ? No ! It is to inspect the city and spy it out with a view to its overthrow that he has sent his servants to you.” Hanun then seized David's servants, had half of their beards shaved off and the lower half of their clothes cut away, and dismissed them. When David was told of this outrage he sent to meet them—for the men were overwhelmed with shame—with instructions to stay at Jericho till their beards were grown, and then come home.

Meanwhile the Ammonites, knowing that they had incurred David's deepest antipathy, sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-Rehob, and of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers ; also the king of Maachah with a thousand men, and from Tob 12,000 men. As soon as David heard this he sent Joab with the whole army <sup>o</sup>and<sup>o</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So Luc. ; MT “my table.”

the Guards<sup>1</sup> against them. Then the Ammonites marched out and drew up in battle order before the gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob, the men of Tob and Maachah, formed a separate army in the open field. Joab accordingly, seeing that he was to be attacked both in front and from the rear, selected the best of the fighting men of Israel, and drew up against the Arameans. The rest of the people he placed under the command of his brother Abishai, and posted them against the Ammonites, saying, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, you must lend me support ; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to your help. Be of good courage, and let us fight manfully for our people, and for the cities of our God ! Then let Yahweh take the issue into his own hands !" Joab then advanced with his troops to join battle with the Arameans, and put them to flight. And when the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they also took to flight before Abishai and re-entered the city. Joab, however, abandoned the attack on the Ammonites and returned to Jerusalem.

When the Arameans saw that they were beaten by the Israelites, they rallied their forces ; and Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans beyond the River (Euphrates). They came to Helam, led by Shobach, Hadadezer's commander in chief. This was reported to David, who mustered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and arrived at Helam. The Arameans drew up against David, and joined battle with him, but were put to flight before the Israelites ; and David slew 700 chariot-horses and 40,000 <sup>2</sup>men<sup>2</sup> of the Arameans, wounding Shobach their commander, so that he died there. And when all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they were worsted by the Israelites, they made peace with Israel, and became subject to it, and the Arameans did not dare to give further assistance to the Ammonites.

In the following year, at the season when °kings° usually take the field,<sup>3</sup> David sent out Joab with his soldiers and all Israel,

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<sup>1</sup> The Heb. word means "Heroes," but is used technically of the *corps d'élite* which formed the standing nucleus of David's army.

<sup>2—2</sup> MT "horsemen" ; but 1 Chr. xix. 18 reads "footmen."

<sup>3</sup> In the spring.

who laid waste the country of the Ammonites and laid siege to Rabbah ; while David remained in Jerusalem.

(3) *David and Bathsheba* (xi. 2-27a).

It happened one evening that David, having risen from his siesta, was walking on the roof of his palace, whence he caught sight of a woman washing herself. The woman was very beautiful ; and David learned on inquiry that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, married to Uriah the Hittite. David then sent messengers to fetch her ; and when she came to him, he slept with her ; she having just purified herself after her uncleanness. Then she returned to her own house.

When the woman became pregnant she sent to inform David of her condition. David forthwith despatched an order to Joab to send him Uriah the Hittite ; and Joab did so. So Uriah came, and David asked him how things went with Joab, and the army, and the campaign. Then he said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." But Uriah, though he left the palace, followed by a present from the king, slept at the palace door with ° ° his master's servants, and did not go down to his house. When they told David that Uriah had not gone down to his house, he said to him, "You were just off a journey ; why did you not go to your house ?" Uriah answered, "Israel and Judah, with the ark, are living in tents ; my lord Joab and your majesty's servants are camping on the bare ground ; how could I enter my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife ? As °Yahweh° lives, and as you live, that is a thing I cannot do !" So David said, "Stay here to-day, then ; and to-morrow I will let you go," and Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. But the next morning David invited him to eat and drink in his presence, and made him drunk. And in the evening he went out and lay on his couch with his master's servants ; but down to his house he did not go.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by Uriah. This is what he wrote in the letter : "Set Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest ; then fall back from him, so that he may be hit and killed." So Joab, examining the city, assigned to Uriah a position where he knew that brave men were stationed ; and when the men of the city made a

sally and fought with Joab, several of the people, David's soldiers, fell; and among the killed was Uriah the Hittite. Joab then sent to David a full report of the battle; and added the following instruction to the messenger: "When you have finished giving your account of the battle, if the king should get angry and say, 'Why did you press the fighting so near the city? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who killed Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal<sup>1</sup>? Was it not a woman who threw a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you venture so close to the wall?'—in that case you will answer, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

So the messenger departed, and came and told David all that Joab had charged him to say, <sup>2</sup>relating the whole course of the battle. David was angry with Joab, and spoke to the messenger<sup>2</sup> exactly as Joab had anticipated. The messenger answered, "The enemy's men were too strong for us, and came out to meet us in the open, <sup>3</sup>and we were driven back<sup>3</sup> to the opening of the gate. There the archers shot at your servants from the wall and several of your Majesty's servants—<sup>4</sup>about eighteen men<sup>4</sup>—were killed; and among the dead is your servant Uriah the Hittite." David then said to the messenger, "Take this message to Joab: 'Do not let this affair trouble you; for the sword cuts this way or that indiscriminately. Press vigorously your assault on the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage him."

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she chanted the funeral wail for him. But as soon as the funeral rites were over, David sent and took her into his house; and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

#### (4) *David and Nathan* (xi. 27b-xii. 14).

But the thing that David had done displeased Yahweh; and he sent to David Nathan <sup>5</sup>the prophet<sup>5</sup>. He went in to him and said:

<sup>1</sup> MT "Jerubbesheth"; see the note on Eshbaal, p. 81.

<sup>2—2</sup> These words are supplied from the LXX, which then repeats the exact questions that Joab had prepared the messenger for.

<sup>3—3</sup> Lit. "we were against (or upon) them" The expression is obscure.

<sup>4—4</sup> Luc., etc.

<sup>5—5</sup> So LXX, etc.

“Two men lived in the same city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had flocks and herds in abundance ; but the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished. It grew up with him and his children ; it shared bite and sup with him, and slept in his bosom ; it was like a daughter to him. Well, there came one on a visit to the rich man ; and because he grudged taking one of his own sheep or oxen to kill for the traveller who had come to him, he took the poor man’s lamb, and prepared it for his guest.”

David’s anger was roused against the man ; and he said to Nathan, “As Yahweh lives, the man who has done this deserves to die ! He must make <sup>1</sup>seven-fold<sup>1</sup> reparation for the lamb, because he has done this thing, and showed no pity.”

Nathan answered, “You are that man ! Thus speaks Yahweh, the God of Israel ! ‘I have anointed you king over Israel, and delivered you out of the hand of Saul ; I have given you the daughter<sup>2</sup> of your master, and handed over his wives to your embraces, and put the daughters<sup>3</sup> of Israel and Judah at your disposal. And if all this were not enough, I would confer on you additional favours of the same kind.’ Why then, have you slighted ° ° Yahweh by doing what is abhorrent to him ? Uriah the Hittite you have slain by the sword, and his wife you have taken as your own, [and him you have murdered by the sword of the Ammonites]. And now the sword shall never cease from your house ; because you have slighted me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite in marriage. This is Yahweh’s sentence : ‘I will raise up trouble for you from your own family, and take away your wives before your eyes and give them to another, who will lie with them in the sight of yonder sun. For whereas you have gone to work in secret, I will carry out this threat before all Israel, and before the sun.’ ”

David then said to Nathan, “I have sinned against Yahweh.” Nathan answered, “Yahweh also on his part has forgiven your sin : you shall not die. Nevertheless, seeing you have in this

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So LXX ; MT “fourfold.”

<sup>2</sup> M’T “house.”

<sup>3</sup> So Syr. ; M’T “house.”

matter set <sup>1</sup> Yahweh at naught, the child that has been born to you shall die.”

(5) *The Death of the Child* (xii. 15-25).

Nathan then went to his house ; and Yahweh struck down the child whom Uriah's wife had borne to David with sickness. Thereupon David sought God in the sanctuary on behalf of the young child, fasting continuously, and going in and spending the nights <sup>2</sup>in sackcloth<sup>2</sup> on the ground. And when the oldest of his servants stood over him, and tried to make him rise from the ground, he refused, and would not break bread with them. On the seventh day the child died. The courtiers were afraid to tell David that he was dead, for they said to one another, “You saw how even while the child was alive he would not listen to us when we spoke to him : we cannot mention the death of the child, or he may do himself an injury.” But David noticed the courtiers whispering together, and, surmising that the child was dead, he asked them if it were so : and they answered “Yes !” David then rose from the ground, washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes, and went into the house of Yahweh and prayed. Afterwards he entered the palace and called for food, which was set before him, and he partook of it. His courtiers, remarking on the strangeness of his conduct, said, “ °While° the child was °still° alive you fasted and wept ; but no sooner is he dead than you rise and take food !” He answered, “As long as the child was alive, I fasted and wept, because I thought, ‘Who knows but Yahweh will take pity on me, and spare the child's life ?’ But now that he is dead why should I fast ? Should I be able to bring him back again ? No ! I shall go to him, but he will never return to me.”

After this David consoled his wife Bathsheba, and renewed conjugal intercourse with her. She bore a son whom he named Solomon. And Yahweh loved him, and through Nathan the prophet conferred on him the name Jedidiah<sup>3</sup> in token of Yahweh's °delight in him.°

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> MT — “the enemies of,” taking the verb in a doubtful sense.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> MT “and lay.” The text varies in LXX.

[<sup>3</sup> The name Jedidiah means “Yahweh's delight.”—Ed.]

(6) *The Capture of Rabbah* (xii. 26-31).

Meanwhile Joab made an assault on Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, and having taken the water<sup>1</sup>-city, he sent messengers to David to say, "I have assaulted Rabbah, and taken the water-city by storm. Now, then, gather the rest of the people, and invest the city and capture it; so that I may not take it and have my name associated with its conquest." So David assembled the whole of the people, marched to Rabbah, and took it by assault. They took the crown from the head of Milcom<sup>2</sup>—it weighed 120 lbs. in gold, and contained<sup>3</sup> a very costly gem—and David put it on his head; and he carried off much spoil from the city. <sup>4</sup>Its population he brought out and set "to forced labour" with saws and iron axes and picks; and made them work with brick-moulds.<sup>4</sup> Having done the same to all the Ammonite cities, David returned with all his army to Jerusalem.

(7) *Amnon and Thamar* (xiii. 1-22).

It was after this that David's son Amnon fell in love with a beautiful sister of Absalom, the son of David, whose name was Thamar. So distracted was Amnon for his half-sister Thamar that he made himself ill; for she was a virgin, and it seemed to Amnon very difficult to do anything to her. Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, a son of Shimeah, David's brother. This Jonadab, who was a very shrewd man, asked him, "How is it, my dear prince, that I find you looking so poorly morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon answered, "I am in love with Thamar, the sister of my brother Absalom." Jonadab then advised him to take to his bed and pretend to be sick, and when his father came to see him to say, "Let my sister Thamar come and give me something to eat. If she would prepare food in my presence, so that I could look on, I would eat from her hand." Amnon accordingly kept his bed, feigning sickness; and the king visited him, when

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<sup>1</sup> MT "royal"; but see next verse.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; MT "their king."

<sup>3</sup> So Versions, and 1 Chr. xx. 2.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> The meaning is obscure. Some think that different kinds of torture are described.



Amnon said to him, "Let Thamar my sister come and make a couple of pancakes in my presence, so that I may eat from her hand." So David sent for Thamar to the palace, and said, "Go to the house of your brother Amnon, and prepare something for him to eat;" and Thamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying in bed. She took some dough, kneaded it, and shaped it into pancakes in his presence, and baked the cakes. Then she <sup>1</sup>called the attendant, who poured them out before him. But Amnon refused to eat, and said, "Put every man out from me!" When everyone had gone out, Amnon said to Thamar, "Bring the food into the bedchamber, and I will eat it from your hand." So Thamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedchamber.

But when she handed it to him to eat he seized hold of her and said, "Come and lie with me, my sister." She answered, "Oh no, my brother! you must not dishonour me; for such things are not done in Israel. Do not commit this outrage. Where should *I* go to hide my shame? And *you* would be regarded as one of the most infamous scoundrels in Israel. Speak to the king, rather; he will not refuse to let you have me." But he would not listen to her, but forced and ravished her. Then he conceived an extreme aversion for her—an aversion stronger than the love he had formerly had for her—and he ordered her to rise and be gone. She answered, <sup>2</sup>"No! No! my brother! For this would be even a greater wrong than the other<sup>2</sup> which you have already done me, if you send me away now." But he paid no heed to her, and called the servant who waited on him, and said, "Put this woman away from me out on the street, and bolt the door behind her."

<sup>3</sup>[She was wearing a long-sleeved garment, such as <sup>o</sup>from of old<sup>o</sup> royal princesses wear while unmarried.] When the servant had turned her out on the street and bolted the door behind her, Thamar strewed ashes on her head, and tore the sleeved garment that she was wearing; and went away <sup>o</sup>screaming<sup>o</sup> with her hand upon her head. Her brother Absalom said to

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A conjectural reading: MT "took the pan (?) and . . ."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So Luc., etc.; MT is untranslatable.

<sup>3</sup> An explanatory gloss on the following verse.

her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Well, now, my sister, just keep silent—after all he is your brother—and do not take this matter to heart." So Tamar lived in seclusion in the house of her brother Absalom.

When king David heard of all these things he was very angry; <sup>1</sup>but he would not do anything to hurt the feelings of Amnon his son, for he was fond of him, because he was his first-born.<sup>1</sup> As for Absalom, he spoke never a word to Amnon good or bad; he so hated Amnon for having violated his sister Tamar.

(8) *Absalom's Revenge* (xiii. 23-38).

Two years passed, and Absalom had a sheep-shearing at Baal-Hazor, near Ephron,<sup>2</sup> to which he invited all the king's sons. First he went in to the king and said, "You know that your servant has a sheep-shearing soon; may he be honoured by the company of the king and his courtiers?" The king replied, "No, my son, we will not all go; for that would cause you inconvenience." Though Absalom <sup>o</sup>pressed him<sup>o</sup>, he refused to go, but gave him his blessing. Then Absalom said, "If that may not be, at least let Amnon my brother go with us." The king answered, "Why should he go with you?" But when Absalom urged him, the king let Amnon go, with all the other princes.

<sup>1</sup>So Absalom prepared a banquet fit for a king<sup>1</sup>; but gave orders to his servants in these words: "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits over his wine, and when I say to you, 'Down with Amnon!' then kill him without fear; for I have given the order. Be bold, and show yourselves men of mettle!" So Absalom's servants did to Amnon as their master had bidden them. Then all the other princes rose up, mounted their mules, and fled.

While they were on their way home, a rumour reached David that Absalom had murdered all the king's sons, and not one of them survived. The king rose up and tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground; while all his courtiers <sup>3</sup>who stood round him tore their clothes likewise.<sup>3</sup> But Jonadab the son of Shimeah,

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Supplied from LXX and Versions.

<sup>2</sup> MT "Ephraim"; but texts of LXX differ.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> So LXX, etc.

David's brother, put in his word and said, "Your Majesty should not believe that all the young princes are slain. It is only Amnon who is dead ; for there has been something grim about Absalom's mouth ever since he violated his sister Tamar. So your Majesty need not take it into his head that all the princes are dead ; Amnon alone is dead." [And Absalom fled.]<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the youth who was on the look-out descried a large body of men <sup>2</sup>coming down the slope on the Horonaim road ; and came in and told the king, " I have seen men from the road to Horonaim coming down<sup>2</sup> by the side of the hill." Jonadab said to the king, " You see ? The princes are coming ! As your servant said, so it turns out ! " The words were hardly out of his mouth when the king's sons came in, and wept aloud ; the king also and all his courtiers broke into vehement weeping ;  
<sup>3</sup>° and the king mourned for his son the whole time.<sup>3</sup>

But Absalom had fled and gone to Thalmai, the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur, where he remained for three years. [But Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur.]<sup>1</sup>

(9) *Absalom restored to the King's Favour* (xiii. 39-xiv. 33).

But <sup>4</sup>the king's spirit<sup>4</sup> longed to go forth to Absalom ; for he was reconciled to the fact that Amnon was dead. Now when Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's mind was set on Absalom, he sent to Tekoa, and brought thence a wise woman, and said to her, " Get yourself up as a mourner and put on mourning weeds ; do not anoint yourself with oil ; and look like a woman who has long mourned for a dead relative. Then go in to the king, and speak to him as I now tell you ; " and Joab primed her with the words he wished her to say.

So the woman from Tekoa went in to the king, and falling on her face to the ground in reverence, cried out, " Help me, O king ! <sup>5</sup>Help me !<sup>5</sup> " Said the king, " What is the matter with you ? " She answered, " Truly, I am a widow ; my

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<sup>1</sup> Transcriptional error.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Inserted from Luc.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Transposing the clause.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> So LXX (partly).

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> LXX.

husband is long dead. And your handmaid had two sons, and they quarrelled in the field where there was no one to separate them, and one of them struck the other and killed him. And now the whole clan is up against your handmaid, demanding that I should give up the murderer of his brother, that they may put him to death for the life of his slain brother, and cut off the heir also. Thus they would extinguish the one spark that remains to me, leaving to my husband neither name nor remnant above the ground." The king said to the woman, "Go home! I will give the necessary orders on your behalf." The Tekoan woman answered, "On me and my family may the guilt lie, O King, and the king and his throne be guiltless!" "Whoever<sup>1</sup> says a word to you," replied the king, "bring him to me, and he shall give you no further trouble." The woman said, "Would the king please to mention the name of Yahweh his God, and swear that the blood-avenger shall not cause further mischief, and that my son shall not be cut off?" "By the life of Yahweh," the king swore, "not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground!"

Then the woman said, "Might your handmaid speak a word to your Majesty?" The king answered, "Certainly!" She said, "Why should you cherish a purpose so injurious to the people of God—for the king by what he has just said has adjudged himself guilty—as to refuse to recall your banished son? We must all die, to be sure, and be like water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up; but God does not cut short the life of him who devises means whereby one that is banished shall not remain banished from him. Now then, I came to tell my story to the king, because people frightened me, and I said to myself, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps the king will take up the cause of his maid-servant. Yes, the king will surely hear and deliver his maid-servant from the hand of the man <sup>2</sup>who is seeking<sup>2</sup> to cut off me and my son together from the people of °Yahweh°.' Your handmaid thought, 'Let the word of my lord the king give me security; for as the Angel of God is my lord the king, in his discernment of right and wrong.' May Yahweh your God be with you!"

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<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2—2</sup> So LXX., etc.

Then the king said in answer to the woman, "Hide nothing from me! I am going to ask you a question." She said, "Speak on, your Majesty!" He then asked, "Has Joab had a hand with you in all this?" And the woman confessed: "As sure as you live, my lord, it is impossible to give an evasive answer to your Majesty's question. Yes! It was your servant Joab who put me up to this, and himself put all these words in your handmaid's mouth. To present the matter in a new light your servant Joab has done this. But my lord has the wisdom of the Angel of God, and knows everything that happens on earth."

The result was that the king said to Joab, "See! I will do as you wish. Go, then, and bring back the young man Absalom." Joab bowed his face to the ground, and thanked the king, and said, "To-day I know that I stand high in your Majesty's favour; since the king has granted his servant's request." Joab set out for Geshur accordingly, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. But the king said, "Let him retire to his own house; he shall not see my face." So Absalom retired to his house, and did not see the king's face.

Now in all Israel there was no man so admired for his beauty as Absalom; from head to foot there was no blemish in him. And when he cut his hair—it was once a year that he cut it, when it became too heavy for him—it used to weigh over 'three and a half pounds' by the royal standard. He had three sons born to him, and one daughter whose name was Thamar<sup>2</sup>—a very beautiful woman.

Thus Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face. At last he sent for Joab, meaning to send him to the king; but Joab would not come. A second time he sent for him; and still Joab refused to come. Then Absalom said to his servants, "You know that field of Joab's next to mine, where he has a crop of barley? Go and set it on fire." The servants went accordingly and set fire to the field. Joab now bestirred himself, came to Absalom in his house, and asked him, "What does this mean? Your servants have set fire to my field." "Well," said Absalom, "I sent for you to

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Or, according to Luc., etc., "a pound and three-quarters."

<sup>2</sup> But Luc., etc., read "Maachab" (see 1 Kings xv. 2).

come here that you might take this message from me to the king : ‘ To what purpose have I come home from Geshur ? I might as well be there still ! But now I must see the king’s face, if any guilt lies on me, put me to death.’ ” Joab then went and told this to the king, who thereupon called Absalom into his presence. When Absalom came, he bowed with his face to the ground before the king ; and the king kissed Absalom.

(10) *Absalom raises the Standard of Revolt* (xv. 1-12).

Soon after this Absalom set up a state-coach with horses, and fifty men running before him. Every morning now found Absalom standing betimes by the road leading to the gate, where he would hail every man who came to submit a dispute to the king’s award, and say, “ From what city do you come ? ” The man would answer, “ From such and such a tribe in Israel ” ; and Absalom would say (after hearing his statement), “ Look you ! Your plea is absolutely good and sound ; but—you will find no representative of the king to hear you.” Or again, Absalom would say, “ If only I were appointed judge in the land, and every one who had a dispute or lawsuit could come to *me* ! I would see him righted.” And when any one approached to pay his respects, Absalom would hold out his hand, and embrace and kiss him. In this way Absalom used to behave to all the Israelites who came to the king for justice ; and thus he stole the affections of the men of Israel.

After four<sup>1</sup> years Absalom said to the king, “ I must go and discharge a vow which I have made to Yahweh in Hebron. For your servant, during his residence in Geshur in Aram, made a vow that if Yahweh would bring me back to Jerusalem I would worship Yahweh <sup>2</sup>in Hebron.” The king answered, “ Go, by all means ! ” So he took his departure and went to Hebron. At the same time Absalom sent secret emissaries through all the tribes of Israel with the intimation : “ When you hear a trumpet blow, then shout, ‘ Absalom reigns in Hebron ! ’ ” There went with Absalom from Jerusalem 200 men who were invited to the sacrificial feast, and went in all good faith, knowing nothing. Moreover Absalom sent <sup>2</sup>an invitation<sup>2</sup> to Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counsellor, to come

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<sup>1</sup> So Luc., etc. ; MT “ forty.”

<sup>2—2</sup> So Luc.

from his city of Giloh, and be present when he offered the sacrifices. Thus the conspiracy gained strength, and more and more people attached themselves to Absalom.

(11) *David leaves Jerusalem—Incidents of the Flight* (xv. 13-xvi. 14).

When the news was brought to David that the heart of the Israelites had been won over to Absalom, he issued orders for immediate flight to all the courtiers who were with him in Jerusalem: "We must be up and flee; there is no other way of escape from Absalom. Make all haste to depart, lest he come upon us suddenly and bring utter disaster on us, and put the city to the sword!" The courtiers answered, "It shall be as your Majesty chooses: we are your servants." So the king went out attended by all his household, except ten concubines whom the king left behind to look after the palace.

So the king went out and all <sup>1</sup>his servants<sup>1</sup> followed him. At the last house in the city he halted with his courtiers standing<sup>2</sup> beside him, while the Crethi and Plethi<sup>3</sup> and the <sup>4</sup>men of Ittai of Gath<sup>4</sup>—600 men who had come with him from Gath—marched past before the king. The king called to Ittai of Gath, "Why should you go with us too? Go back, and stay with the new king; for you are a foreigner and an exile from your native land. It was but yesterday that you came; and should I to-day make you a wanderer with us, when I am going I know not where? Go back, and take your fellow-countrymen with you; <sup>5</sup>and may Yahweh be<sup>5</sup> gracious and true <sup>5</sup>to you<sup>5</sup>!" But Ittai replied to the king, "As Yahweh lives, and your Majesty lives, I will not! Where my lord the king is, be it for life or for death, there will your servant be!" David said, "Very good, then! Pass on!" So Ittai of Gath marched past with all his men and his camp-followers; while the whole region resounded with loud weeping as all the people went past.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "the people."

<sup>2</sup> MT "passing."

<sup>3</sup> See p. 95.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> MT "Gittites."

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> Inserted from LXX.



In the Kidron valley the king again stopped<sup>1</sup>, while all the people passed <sup>2</sup>by him, making for the olive-tree on the verge of the wilderness.<sup>2</sup> There too were Zadok <sup>3</sup>and Abiathar <sup>3</sup> who bore the ark of <sup>4</sup> God, which they had <sup>5</sup>set down<sup>5</sup> till the people from the city were all gone past. But the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back to the city! If Yahweh is gracious to me he will bring me back and let me look on it and its abode. But if his mind is such that he has no good-will towards me—so be it! Let him do to me as he sees right." The king said further to Zadok the priest, "Look! You and Abiathar will return quietly to the city with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar—both your sons are with you. Now mark! I will tarry by the fords of the wilderness until I receive a message from you to give me information." So Zadok and Abiathar brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and remained there.

David then went up the ascent of the mount of Olives, weeping as he went, with his head muffled and walking barefoot; and all the people that were with him had covered their heads, and wept continually as they made the ascent. Now David <sup>°</sup>had been told<sup>°</sup> that Ahithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom, and he had said, "Turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness, O Yahweh!" And just as David reached the top of the hill, where it is the custom to worship God, lo! Hushai the Archite, <sup>6</sup>David's friend,<sup>6</sup> met him with coat torn and earth on his head. So David said to him, "If you come along with me you will only be an encumbrance to me. On the other hand, if you go back to the city, and speak to Absalom somewhat in this fashion: 'I would be your servant, O king! I was your father's servant formerly, but now I am yours'—then you may be able to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel in my interest. You will find there Zadok and Abiathar the priests; everything you hear from the palace you will make

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<sup>1</sup> MT "crossed."

<sup>2—2</sup> So Luc.; MT contains untranslatable expressions.

<sup>3—3</sup> MT "and the Levites."

<sup>4—4</sup> MT inserts "the covenant of."

<sup>5—5</sup> MT "poured out"!

<sup>6—6</sup> LXX.

known to them. And look ! Their two sons are with them there, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan ; through them you can send me word of all you hear." So Hushai, David's friend, came to the city just as Absalom entered Jerusalem.

When David had passed the summit a little way, Ziba, Meribaal's servant, met him with a pair of asses saddled and loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 raisin-cakes, 100 summer-fruits, and a skin of wine. To the king's question, "What are these for ?" Ziba answered, "The asses are for the king's family to ride upon ; the bread and the fruit are for the young men to eat ; and the wine is for any to drink who may faint in the wilderness." The king then asked, "But where is your master's son ?" "Oh !" said Ziba, "he remains in Jerusalem, for he thinks the time has come when the house of Israel will restore to him the kingdom of his grandfather." "I see !" said the king. "Then all that belonged to Meribaal is yours," to which Ziba replied, "I fall on my knees ! May you always be gracious to me, your Majesty !"

As king David reached Bahurim, a man was seen coming out of that village, who was of the same clan as Saul's family, by name Shimei, a son of Gera. He came out cursing all the time, and throwing stones at David and all the courtiers ; although all the people and the whole Guard<sup>1</sup> were marching to right and left of him. Shimei's cursing ran thus, "Out with you ! Out with you ! You man of blood ! You son of perdition ! Yahweh has brought on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead you reigned, and has given the kingship into the hand of your son Absalom ; and here you are in your adversity, because you are a man of blood !" Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should your Majesty be cursed by this dead cur ? Let me go across and cut off his head." But the king answered, "Oh, you sons of Zeruiah ! What can I make of you ? If he curses, and if Yahweh has said to him, 'Curse David,' who can find fault with him for doing so ?" And speaking to the whole court, as well as to Abishai, David said, "You see that my own son, the fruit of my body, is seeking my life ; what wonder if this

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 97, n. 1.

Benjamite does the same? Leave him alone, and let him curse; for Yahweh has bidden him. It may be that Yahweh will look on my °affliction°, and requite me with good for the curse which falls on me this day.” So David and his men went along the road, while Shimei walked alongside of him on the hillside, cursing as he went, and flinging stones ° ° and dirt.

At last the king and all his followers arrived, faint and weary, <sup>1</sup>at the fords of the wilderness<sup>1</sup>, where he refreshed himself.

(12) *Absalom in Jerusalem* (xvi. 15-xvii. 23).

By this time Absalom and ° ° all the men of Israel had come to Jerusalem, Ahithophel also being with him. And when Hushai the Archite, David’s friend, came to Absalom he cried to him, “Long live the king! Long live the king!” Absalom said to Hushai, “Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why have you not gone with your friend?” Hushai answered, “No! But to him whom Yahweh and this people and all Israel have chosen, °to him° I belong, and with him I remain. And besides! Whom shall I be serving? His son, of course! As I served before your father, so will I serve before you.”

Absalom then said to Ahithophel, “Give us your advice as to what we should do.” Ahithophel answered, “Go in to your father’s concubines, whom he left to look after the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself obnoxious to your father, and the courage of all your followers will be strengthened.” So they set up the bridal tent for Absalom on the roof, and he went in to his father’s concubines in the view of all Israel. For the counsel given by Ahithophel in those days was esteemed as highly as a divine oracle: such was the authority of all Ahithophel’s counsel both to David and to Absalom.

Ahithophel then made a further proposal to Absalom: “Let me choose 12,000 men, and I will start in pursuit of David this night, and come upon him while he is weary and disheartened; I will thus put him in fright, and all the people that are with him will flee, so that I can kill the king alone.

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Supplying conjecturally an accidental omission in the text.

Then I will bring all the people round to you, <sup>1</sup>as a bride turns to her husband. It is but one man's life<sup>1</sup> that you seek, <sup>°</sup>and<sup>°</sup> the people as a whole will have peace." This advice seemed very plausible to Absalom and all the elders of Israel. However, Absalom said, "Call Hushai the Archite, and let us hear also what he has to say." When Hushai came in Absalom told him what Ahithophel had just said, and asked, "Shall we act on his advice? If you are of a different opinion, speak your mind!" Hushai answered to Absalom, "The counsel that Ahithophel has given this time is not sound!" "You know yourself," he continued, "that your father and his men are veterans, and full of grim courage as a wild she-bear robbed of her cubs. Moreover, your father is a wary soldier, who will not spend the night with the army; you may be sure that he is now hidden in some ravine, or some other place. If now, on the first onset, some of <sup>°</sup>our people<sup>°</sup> fall, those who hear of it will say, 'A defeat has been inflicted on the adherents of Absalom!' Then will even the bravest man, though he has the courage of a lion, grow faint-hearted; for all Israel knows that your father is a hero and his companions brave men. My advice, therefore is this: Let all Israel from Dan to Beersheba be gathered to you, numerous as the sand by the sea-shore, and you in person shall march <sup>2</sup>in their midst.<sup>2</sup> Then when we come on him in whatever place he is to be found, we shall light on him in numbers like dewdrops falling on the earth; and of him and all the men that are with him not one shall be left. But if it should be a city to which he has retired, in that case all Israel will <sup>°</sup>bring<sup>°</sup> ropes to that city, and we will drag it into the valley, till not a pebble remains there!" Then Absalom and all the Israelites said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than that of Ahithophel!" For Yahweh had so ordained that the good counsel of Ahithophel should be frustrated, in order that he might bring disaster on Absalom.

Hushai then told Zadok and Abiathar the priests what advice Ahithophel had given to Absalom, and the elders of Israel, and what he himself had advised, and said, "Send quickly, now, and warn David not to pass this night by the fords of the wilderness,

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX; MT unintelligible.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "in the battle."

but by all means to cross (the Jordan), lest the king and all who are with him be destroyed." Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at the well Rogel, and a maid went from time to time and brought them news, which they would carry to king David; for they durst not let themselves be seen by entering the city. On this occasion, however, a lad saw them, and informed Absalom. The two of them, therefore, departed in all haste, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard. Into this they went down, and the man's wife fetched a sheet and placed it over the mouth of the well, and spread bruised corn over it, so that there was nothing to excite curiosity. So when Absalom's servants came to the house and asked the woman where Ahimaaz and Jonathan were, she said, "They are gone on °from here° to the water," and after a fruitless search they returned to Jerusalem. After they had gone, Ahimaaz and Jonathan came up out of the well, and went with their message to king David, and said to him, "Be up, and cross the water instantly; for so and so has Ahithophel counselled with regard to you." Then David and all the people that were with him got up and crossed the Jordan; and by morning light they were all over Jordan to the last man.

But Ahithophel, seeing that his advice was not followed, saddled his ass, and went home to his city. There, after settling his affairs, he hanged himself and died, and was buried in his father's grave.

(13) *David in Mahanaim* (xvii. 24-29).

David had already reached Mahanaim when Absalom crossed the Jordan, accompanied by all the men of Israel. Instead of Joab Absalom had appointed Amasa to command the army. (This Amasa was the illegitimate<sup>1</sup> son of an Ishmaelite<sup>2</sup> named Jithra; his mother being Abigail, the daughter of Jesse,<sup>3</sup> the sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother.) Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

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<sup>1</sup> Not in our sense, however. He was probably the issue of an irregular marriage, in which the usual purchase-price had not been paid to the father of the bride.

<sup>2</sup> So 1 Chr. ii. 17, and a MS. of LXX; MT "Israelite."

<sup>3</sup> So Luc.; compare 1 Chr. ii. 16; MT "Nahash."

When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash, from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite, from Rogelim, <sup>1</sup>brought couches<sup>1</sup> to lie on, rugs,<sup>1</sup> basins and earthen vessels. They also brought wheat, barley, meal, parched corn, beans, lentils, ° °, honey, curdled milk, sheep and . . . (?) of the herd; these they brought to David and his followers to eat, for they said, "The folks are hungry, tired and thirsty in the wilderness."

(14) *The Battle in the Wood: the Death of Absalom* (xviii. 1-18).

David then reviewed the forces at his disposal, and appointed officers for each regiment and company. The whole army he <sup>2</sup>divided into three corps<sup>2</sup>: the first under the command of Joab, the second under Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and the third under Ittai of Gath. The king further announced to the people his intention to take the field with them in person; but the people answered, "That you shall not do! For if we should be put to flight they will not concern themselves about us—even if half of us were killed they would not care; but °you° are worth ten thousand of the like of us. Besides, it is better that you should be in readiness to send us assistance from the city." The king said, "I submit to your wish." So the king stood by the side of the gate, while the troops marched out by companies and regiments. But the king laid this charge on Joab, Abishai and Ittai: "Mind you deal gently for my sake with young Absalom!" All the people heard the king give this command concerning Absalom to all the generals.

The army then marched out to the open country against the Israelites; and the battle took place in the wood of <sup>3</sup>Ephraim.<sup>3</sup> There the Israelites were defeated by David's men; and the slaughter that day was frightful—as many as 20,000 men. The battle extended over the whole surrounding country; and the wood accounted for the death of more men than perished by the sword that day. In the confusion, Absalom came accidentally on the soldiers of David. He was riding on a mule, and

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<sup>1</sup> LXX.

<sup>2—2</sup> So Luc.: MT "sent."

<sup>3—3</sup> Luc. reads "Mahanaim," which is possibly correct.

the mule ran under the branches of a great oak-tree,<sup>1</sup> and his head was caught fast in the oak, so that he was suspended<sup>2</sup> between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him ran on. Some man saw this and told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak!" "You saw him!" said Joab. "Why did you not strike him down there and then? I should then have had the pleasure of presenting you with ten silver crowns<sup>3</sup> and a girdle." But the man answered Joab, "And if I had a thousand silver crowns weighed into my hand, I would not lay a hand on the king's son; for in the hearing of us all the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai in these words: 'Have a care °for my sake° of young Absalom.' Ay, and if I *had* acted treacherously at the risk of my life—for there is nothing that the king will not discover!—*you* would leave me in the lurch." Joab said, <sup>4</sup>"I cannot stand arguing with you all day!"<sup>4</sup> and, taking three darts in his hand, he went and thrust them into Absalom's heart. While he was still alive in the thick branches of the oak, ten youths, armour-bearers of Joab, came up and smote Absalom dead. Joab then sounded the trumpet, and the people ceased pursuing the Israelites, for Joab held them back. And they took Absalom and threw him into a great hole in the wood, and erected a huge cairn of stones over him. All the Israelites had meanwhile fled to their several homes.

[But Absalom had during his lifetime taken a stone and set it up for himself as a monument in the King's Vale; for he thought to himself, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." Hence he called the monument by his own name, and it is known as Absalom's monument to this day.]

(15) *How the News was brought to David* (xviii. 19-32).

Now Ahimaaz the son of Zadok had said <sup>5</sup>to Joab<sup>5</sup>, "Let me run and carry to the king the good news that Yahweh has freed him from the hand of his foes." But Joab answered,

<sup>1</sup> Strictly "terebinth."

<sup>2</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "shekels."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Or (following Luc., etc.), "So then I must make a beginning before you!"

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> So Luc.



"You are not the man to carry tidings to-day; another time you shall carry tidings, but not to-day, seeing the king's son is dead." And Joab said to a Cushite, "Go and tell the king what you have seen;" and the Cushite, bowing low to Joab, ran off. But Ahimaaz the son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, let me run after the Cushite." "Why would you run, my son," answered Joab, "when no reward for good news can be paid to you?" <sup>1</sup>He said<sup>1</sup>, "All the same, I will run!" "Very well, then," said Joab, "run!" So Ahimaaz ran off, and taking the way of the Jordan Oval he outran the Cushite.

David was sitting in the archway between the outer and inner gates, when the watchman went to the roof of the gate on the wall, and looking out saw a single man running. The watchman called out and told the king, who replied, "If he is alone he brings tidings." As the man drew nearer and nearer the watchman saw another running, and called to the gate<sup>2</sup>, "I see another<sup>1</sup> man running alone." "Then he also brings tidings," said the king. The watchman called, "The running of the foremost looks to me like the running of Ahimaaz, Zadok's son." "A good man!" remarked the king. "He will bring good news." As Ahimaaz <sup>3</sup>drew near<sup>3</sup> he called to the king, "All's well!" and throwing himself on his face to the ground before the king he said, "All praise to Yahweh your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against your Majesty!" The king asked, "Is young Absalom safe?" and Ahimaaz answered, "I saw a great commotion <sup>4</sup>when the king's servant Joab sent me off<sup>4</sup>; but I do not know what was going on." "Step aside," said the king, "and stand here." So he went to one side and waited; and straightway the Cushite came and said, "Prepare yourself for good news, your Majesty! Yahweh has this day vindicated your right against all your adversaries." The king asked the Cushite, "Is young Absalom safe?" The Cushite answered, "May your Majesty's enemies

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX, etc.

<sup>2</sup> LXX, etc.; MT "porter."

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> Luc.; MT "called."

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> Slightly altered text.

and all who have rebelled against you, share the fate of that young man ! ”

(16) *David's Grief for Absalom* (xviii. 33-xix. 8a).

Then the king in great agitation went up to the roof-chamber over the gate, and wept ; and all the way as he went he kept repeating, “ O, my son Absalom ! My son ! My son Absalom ! Would that I had died instead of you ! Absalom, my son ! My son ! ”

When it was reported to Joab that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom, the victory was that day turned to mourning for all the people ; for they heard that the king was grieved for his son. The people crept furtively into the city that day, like men who are ashamed of having turned their backs in battle. And all the while the king sat with his face covered, and wailed aloud, “ O my son Absalom ! Absalom, my son, my son ! ”

At last Joab went in to the king in the house, and said, “ You have this day shamed the faces of all your servants who have saved your life this day, and the lives of your sons and daughters your wives and ° ° concubines, by showing love for those who hate you, and hatred for those who love you ! For you make it plain to-day that officers and men are nothing to you. Now I see that if Absalom were living and all of us dead to-day, it would please you well ! But now, rouse yourself ! Go out and speak kindly to your servants. For I swear by Yahweh that unless you show yourself, not a man will spend this night with you. And that will be a worse misfortune for you than all that you have come through from your youth till now ! ” Then the king rose up and took his seat in the gate. And when it was announced to all the people that the king was sitting in the gate, they all presented themselves before the king.

(17) *David's Home-coming : Scenes by the Jordan* (xix. 8b-40).

The Israelites had now fled to their homes ; and there was great dissension throughout the whole nation. In all the tribes of Israel people were saying, “ The king saved us from the hand of our enemies ; it was he who freed us from the grip of the Philistines ; and yet the king has had to flee the country before

Absalom ! And Absalom, whom we had anointed king over us, has fallen in battle—why then is there no talk of bringing back the king ? ” <sup>1</sup>When these words of the Israelites reached his ears ° °,<sup>1</sup> king David sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests to this effect, “ Speak to the elders of Judah, and ask them why they should be behindhand in bringing about the king’s return home. Say to them, ‘ You are my kinsmen, of my bone and flesh ; why are you the last to bring the king back ? ’ And say to Amasa, ‘ You are of my bone and flesh ! God do to me what he will if you are not made my commander-in-chief for good instead of Joab ! ’ ” Thus °he swayed° the minds of all the men of Judah, so that they sent a unanimous request to the king to return with his whole court.

The king then started on his homeward journey, and reached the Jordan ; while the men of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort him across the river. Shimei also, the son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, came down in haste with the men of Judah to meet king David, bringing 1,000 men of Benjamin with him ; and Ziba, the servant of Saul’s family, with his fifteen sons and twenty slaves, had hurried to the Jordan before the king arrived °and had crossed° the ford that they might bring the king over, and do anything he wanted. So Shimei the son of Gera threw himself down before the king as he was about to cross the Jordan, and said, “ Let not my lord hold me guilty, nor call to mind the heinous offence which your servant committed on the day when your Majesty left Jerusalem ; let not the king lay it to heart, for your servant is conscious of his sin. And to-day, as you see, I am the first of all the house of Joseph to come down and meet the king.” Here Abishai the son of Zeruiah broke in and said, “ Shall Shimei’s life be spared for this, when he cursed the anointed of Yahweh ? ” But David said, “ What have I to do with you, sons of Zeruiah, that you should play the tempter to me<sup>2</sup> this day ? Should any man be put to death in Israel this day ? Do I not this day know that I am king over Israel ? ” The king then said to Shimei, “ You shall not die,” and gave him his oath upon it.

Meribaal, the grandson of Saul, was another who had come

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> A half-verse transposed.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 72, n. 1—1.

down to meet the king : he had not dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day of the king's departure to the day when he came safely back. When he came °from° Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why did you not go with me, Meribaal ?" He answered, "Your Majesty, my servant has played me false ! <sup>1</sup>I gave him the order to saddle<sup>1</sup> my ass, that I might ride on it, and go with the king, for I am lame. Instead of that he has slandered me to your Majesty. But your Majesty is as the angel of God : do to me then as you please. For seeing my whole family were but dead men before your Majesty, and you placed your servant among your table-companions, what further right have I to complain to the king ?" The king said to him, "Why so many words ? I decide that you and Ziba shall divide the estate." "Let him take the whole," said Meribaal to the king, "now that your Majesty has come home in safety !"

Barzillai the Gileadite had also come down from Rogelim and accompanied the king to the Jordan to see him off ° °.° Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age ; it was he who had supported the king all the time he was in Mahanaim, for he was very rich. The king said to him, "You must come along with me, and let me provide for <sup>2</sup>your old age<sup>2</sup> in Jerusalem. But Barzillai answered, "How many years have I yet to live that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem ? I am eighty years old this day ; how could I distinguish one thing from another ? Could your servant know the taste of what he ate or drank ; or listen to the voice of singers, male or female ? Why then should your servant be any longer a burden to your Majesty ? Your servant would accompany the king a little way ° ° ; why should the king reward me so liberally ? Let your servant go back and die in his own city, by the grave of his father and mother. But your servant Chimham here may go over with your Majesty : treat him as you think fit." The king answered, "Then let Chimham come over with me ; and I will treat him as you would wish ; and anything you choose to ask I will do for you." All the people then crossed the

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> LXX, etc. ; MT "I proposed to saddle."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> LXX, etc.

Jordan, while the king stayed<sup>1</sup> to kiss Barzillai, and bid him good-bye, after which he returned to his home. So the king crossed over to Gilgal, taking Chimham with him ; and all the people of Judah <sup>2</sup>went on with<sup>2</sup> the king, as well as the half of Israel.

(18) *The Insurrection of Sheba* (xix. 41-xx. 22).

Then all of a sudden the Israelites came to the king and said to him, " Why have our brothers the men of Judah carried you off, and brought the king and all his family over the Jordan [and all David's men with him] ? " The men of Judah answered the men of Israel, " Why, because the king is my near kinsman ! Why in the world should you get angry at that ? Have we eaten any part of the king, or has he been kidnapped by us ? " But the men of Israel retorted, " I have ten shares in the king ; moreover I am the <sup>3</sup>firstborn<sup>3</sup> and not you ! Why have you slighted me ? Was I not the first <sup>o</sup> <sup>o</sup> to speak of bringing back the king ? " But the language of the men of Judah was more vehement than that of the men of Israel.

Now it so happened that there was present an ill-affected man named Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. This man sounded a trumpet and cried,

" No share have we in David,  
And no reversion in the son of Jesse !  
Each man to his tent, O Israel ! "

Then all the Israelites fell away from David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri, while the men of Judah clung to their king, and accompanied him from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

The first thing the king did on entering his palace in Jerusalem was to take the ten concubines whom he had left to keep the palace, and put them in confinement, where he maintained them without going near them. They remained shut up till the day of their death—<sup>4</sup>widows in their husband's lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luc., etc. ; MT " crossed."

<sup>2—2</sup> LXX ; MT " brought over."

<sup>3—3</sup> LXX ; MT " in David."

<sup>4—4</sup> This seems to be the meaning of the LXX equivalent of the Heb phrase. MT suggests in " living widowhood " !

Then the king said to Amasa, "Call out for me the men of Judah, and present yourself here within three days!" So Amasa went to call out the men of Judah. But when he failed to appear at the appointed time, David said to Abishai,<sup>1</sup> "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take you your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get into fortified cities and <sup>2</sup>elude our search<sup>2</sup>." There went out accordingly <sup>3</sup>after Abishai<sup>3</sup> Joab with the Crethi and Plethi and all the Guards; they marched out from Jerusalem in pursuit of Sheba the son of Bichri.

When they were at the great stone in Gibeon, Amasa appeared in front of them. Now Joab <sup>4</sup>was wearing his military coat, with a sword girt on over it, fastened round his loins in its sheath: this had slipped out and fallen, and he had picked it up with his left hand.<sup>4</sup> Then he said to Amasa, "Are you well, my brother?" taking him by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa was not on his guard against the sword in Joab's <sup>5</sup>left<sup>5</sup> hand; so Joab stabbed him with it in the belly, and his entrails were shed on the ground, and he died without a second stroke. Joab and his brother Abishai then pursued Sheba the son of Bichri, while one of Joab's men stood over Amasa and cried, "Let him who loves Joab and is on David's side follow Joab!" But Amasa lay weltering in blood in the middle of the road; and the man, seeing that all the people stood still, dragged the body out of the road into the field, and threw a garment over it, when he saw that every one who came up to it stood still. After he had thus <sup>6</sup>removed<sup>6</sup> it out of the way, they all passed on after Joab in pursuit of Sheba the son of Bichri.

This man passed through all the tribes of Israel till he came to Abel of Beth-Maachah, where all the Bichrites<sup>5</sup> gathered together, and entered it after him. But <sup>7</sup>Joab and his men<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Syriac version reads "Joab," which some prefer.

<sup>2—2</sup> An uncertain rendering of a difficult phrase.

<sup>3—3</sup> MT "after the men of."

<sup>4—4</sup> The text is very ambiguous and obscure, and leaves much to be supplied. The above is only an attempt to describe the incident on one interpretation of the meaning.

<sup>5</sup> An emendation based on LXX.

came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-Maachah, and raised a mound against the city <sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>; and all Joab's people set about the work of destruction so as to bring down the wall. Then a wise woman, <sup>1</sup>standing on the outer wall,<sup>1</sup> called from the city, "Hearken! Hearken! Ask Joab to come here: I wish to speak with him." When he came near her, the woman said, "Are you Joab?" and he said, "I am." She said, "Listen to what your handmaid has to say!" He replied, "I am listening." Then she spoke as follows: "It was a common saying in former days, 'Let them inquire in Abel <sup>2</sup>and in Dan whether that which<sup>2</sup> the faithful in Israel <sup>2</sup>have ordained has gone out of fashion<sup>2</sup>.' You are seeking to <sup>o</sup>lay waste<sup>o</sup> a mother-city in Israel: why should you destroy the inheritance of Yahweh?" Joab answered, "That is very far from my intention! I wish neither to destroy nor to lay waste. The matter does not stand so; but there is a man from the hills of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, who has raised his hand against king David: deliver up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." "Then," said the woman, "his head shall be thrown to you over the wall." So the woman with her wisdom <sup>3</sup>talked over the whole city<sup>3</sup>; and they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it to Joab. Joab then sounded the trumpet, and they <sup>o</sup>withdrew<sup>o</sup> from the city and dispersed to their several homes, while Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

(19) *A Second List of David's Officials* (xx. 23-26). [Comp. viii. 16-18, p. 94.]

Joab was commander of the whole army <sup>o</sup> <sup>o</sup>; Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the <sup>o</sup>Crethi<sup>o</sup> and Plethi; Adoram (?) was over the labour-gangs. Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was chancellor; Sheva (?) secretary of State; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; also Ira of Jair was a priest of David's.

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1—1 Transferring a clause from v. 15 to v. 16.

2—2 So LXX; MT hardly translatable.

3—3 LXX; MT "came to all the people."



#### 4. SUPPLEMENTARY EXTRACTS ON DAVID'S REIGN (xxi.-xxiv.).

*These four chapters form an appendix to the Book of Samuel—breaking the connection between 2 Sam. xx. 22 and 1 Kings i. 1—and must have been added to the book after the separation of Kings from Samuel. They are here rearranged in accordance with the subject matter : narrative (xxi. 1-14 ; xxiv.) ; annalistic (xxi. 15-22 ; xxiii. 8-39) ; and poetical (xxiii. 1-7 ; xxii).*

##### (1) *The Gibeonites' Revenge on Saul* (xxi. 1-14).

In the days of David there was a famine which lasted three years in succession. When David consulted the oracle of Yahweh, the answer was, "On Saul and on <sup>o</sup>his house lies blood-guilt,<sup>o</sup> inasmuch as he slew the Gibeonites." The king then summoned the Gibeonites, and said to them—it must be understood that the Gibeonites did not belong to Israel, but to the remnant of the Amorites ; and Saul, out of zeal for Israel [and Judah], but in violation of the oath which the Israelites had sworn to them, had sought to extirpate them. David, then asked the Gibeonites—"What shall I do for you, and how can I make atonement, that you may bless the people of Yahweh ?" The Gibeonites answered, "There is no question of silver or gold between me and Saul and his house, <sup>1</sup>but of blood<sup>1</sup> ; and we have not the right to put any man in Israel to death." He said, "What do you require that I should do for you ?" The Gibeonites replied, "From the sons of the man who harassed us, and meant to exterminate us, so that we should have no footing anywhere in the territory of Israel—from his sons let seven be given up to us, that we may impale them before Yahweh<sup>2</sup> in Gibeon on the hill <sup>2</sup>of Yahweh." The king agreed to give them up. The king, however, spared Meribaal, the son of Jonathan, Saul's son, because of the oath by Yahweh which was made between them—that is, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. So he took the two sons whom Rizpah the daughter of Aiah had borne to Saul, Armoni and Meribaal ; and the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Implied, but not expressed, in the text.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> So LXX partly.

<sup>3</sup> So Luc., Syr., etc. ; MT Michal (wrongly).

whom she had borne to Adriel the son of Barzillai of Meholah ; and delivered them up to the Gibeonites, who impaled them on the hill before Yahweh ; all the seven dying together. It was in the first days of harvest that they were executed, in the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took her mourning-garment and spread it as a bed for herself on the rock from the beginning of harvest until rain had fallen from heaven on the corpses, keeping the birds of the air from lighting upon them by day, and warding off the wild beasts by night.

When David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul's concubine, had done, he caused the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan to be taken from the citizens of Jabesh-Gilead (who had stolen them from the public square of Bethshean, where the Philistines had hung them when they defeated Saul at Gilboa), and brought them up thence. And having collected the bones of the impaled men, they buried them °with° those of Saul and his son Jonathan in the territory of Benjamin, at Zela, in the grave of his father Kish. After all was done according to the king's command, God yielded to entreaty on behalf of the land.

## (2) *The Census and the Pestilence* (xxiv.).

Another time Yahweh's wrath broke forth against Israel ; and he incited David against them by suggesting to him to take a census of Israel and Judah. So the king ordered Joab 'and the officers of' the army under him to make a tour through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and enrol the people, so that he might know how many there were of them. Joab answered the king, "May Yahweh your God multiply the people, be they ever so numerous, a hundredfold, and may your Majesty live to see it ! But why should your Majesty desire such a thing ? " However, the king's command overbore the opinion of Joab and the officers of the army ; and they set out °from° the king's presence to enrol the people of Israel.

Crossing the Jordan, they began <sup>2</sup>from Aroer and <sup>2</sup>the city that

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<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So 1 Chr. xxi. 2 and Luc. : MT "the commander of."

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Luc. ; MT "encamped in the south of."

lies in the (Arnon) valley, travelling in the direction of the Gadites and on to Jazer. Then they came to Gilead, and so on to the country of <sup>1</sup>the Hittites towards Kadesh.<sup>1</sup> When they reached Dan they <sup>2</sup>turned thence<sup>2</sup> to Sidon, and came to the fortress of Tyre, and all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites. Thence they journeyed to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. When they had gone through the whole land, they returned to Jerusalem, after an absence of nine months and twenty days, and Joab handed to the king the numbers of the people enrolled ; viz., Israel, 800,000 men of war wielding the sword, and the Judeans 500,000 men.

But David's conscience smote him afterwards °for° having numbered the people, and he confessed to Yahweh, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Yahweh, pass over the guilt of thy servant, for I was infatuated." ° ° But the word of Yahweh had already come to Gad the prophet, David's seer, commanding him to go and say to David, "Thus speaks Yahweh : Three things I put in your choice : decide which of them I shall do to you." <sup>3</sup>So when David rose in the morning,<sup>3</sup> Gad came to him and told him this, and said, "Shall a three<sup>4</sup> years' famine visit your land ? Or will you flee three months before your enemy, <sup>5</sup>pursued by the sword<sup>5</sup> ? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in the land ? Now consider, and see what answer I am to take to him who sends me !" David said to Gad, "I am in a terrible dilemma ! Let us fall into the hands of Yahweh, for his compassion is great : into the hands of man I would not fall." <sup>6</sup>So David chose the pestilence.

It was in the time of wheat harvest when the plague broke out among the people<sup>6</sup>, and there died of the people from Dan

1—1 Luc.

2—2 A necessary emendation.

3—3 The phrase is transferred from the beginning of verse 11.

4 So 1 Chro. xxi. 12 ; MT "seven."

5—5 After 1 Chr. xxi. 12 ; MT "while he pursues you."

6—6 I.XX, etc. ; MT "And Yahweh gave a pestilence in Israel from the morning even to the appointed time" (?).

to Beersheba 70,000 men. <sup>1</sup>When David saw the angel who was spreading destruction among the people, he prayed to Yahweh and said: "See! it is I who have sinned—I who have transgressed; but these are the sheep; what have they done? Let thy hand light on me and on my father's house."<sup>1</sup> And as the angel stretched out his hand towards Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh relented of the evil, and said to the angel who was spreading destruction among the people, "Enough! Now stay thy hand!" The angel of Yahweh was just then standing beside the threshing-floor of Arauna the Jebusite.

That day Gad came to David and said, "Go up and rear an altar to Yahweh on the threshing-floor of Arauna the Jebusite;" and David went up at Gad's bidding, as Yahweh had commanded. When Arauna, <sup>2</sup>who was busy threshing wheat<sup>2</sup>, looked out and saw the king and his courtiers advancing towards him, he came out and prostrated himself before the king, and asked, "For what purpose does your Majesty pay this visit to his servant?" "I am come," said David, "to buy the threshing-floor from you, in order to build an altar to Yahweh, so that the plague may be averted from the people." Arauna said to David, "My lord the king may take and offer up in sacrifice whatever he pleases! Here are the oxen for a burnt-offering; the threshing-drags and ox-harness for wood. All these <sup>3</sup>your Majesty's servant<sup>3</sup> presents to the king. May Yahweh," he said, "be gracious to you!" But the king answered Arauna, "By no means! I will certainly buy it from you at its proper price. I would not bring to Yahweh my God burnt-offerings that cost me nothing!" So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty silver crowns.<sup>4</sup>

Then David built an altar there to Yahweh, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. And Yahweh yielded to entreaty on behalf of the land, and the plague was warded off from Israel.

### (3) *Some Exploits of David's Warriors* (xxi. 15-22).

The Philistines were again at war with Israel; and David

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> *Vv.* 16 and 17 transposed.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> *1 Chr.* xxi. 12c.

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> *MT* "Arauna."

<sup>4</sup> "Shekels"; 50 shekels would be the equivalent of nearly £7 as bullion.

went down with his men, <sup>1</sup>and encamped in Gob<sup>1</sup>. As they were fighting the Philistines there, <sup>2</sup>Dod<sup>2</sup>, a descendant of the giants, who had a spear weighing 13 lbs. in bronze, and was girt with a new \* \* \* (?), <sup>2</sup>attacked David<sup>2</sup> and thought to kill him. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his rescue, and smote the Philistine dead. At that time David's followers made an oath and said ° °, "You shall not henceforth go with us into battle, lest you extinguish the lamp of Israel."

After this there was another battle with the Philistines in Gob; when Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, another of the descendants of the giants.

At another battle with the Philistines in Gob, Elhanan the son of Jair<sup>3</sup> ° °, the Bethlehemite, slew Goliath of Gath, who had a spear-shaft like a weaver's beam.

Again there was a battle in Gath, where a <sup>4</sup>very tall<sup>4</sup> man who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, four and twenty in all—he too was a descendant of the giants—flouted Israel, and was slain by Jonathan the son of David's brother Shimei.

All these four belonged to the race of the giants in Gath, and fell by the hands of David and his men.

#### (4) *A List of David's Heroes* (xxiii. 8-12; 17b-39; 13-17a).

The following are the names of David's heroes:

<sup>5</sup>Ishbaal the Hachmonite<sup>5</sup>, the chief of the <sup>6</sup>Three<sup>6</sup>. He <sup>7</sup>swung his spear<sup>7</sup> over 800 slain men at one time. Next to him of the Three heroes came Eleazar the son of Dodi ° ° the Ahohite: <sup>8</sup>he was<sup>8</sup> with David <sup>8</sup>in Paddamim when<sup>8</sup> the Philistines were gathered there for battle. When the men of

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Representing the senseless "and Ishbi Benob" of the next verse.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> The words "Dod attacked" in place of "David was weary" of MT, omitting "Ishbi Benob."

<sup>3</sup> So 1 Chr. xx. 5.

<sup>4</sup>—<sup>4</sup> 1 Chr. xx. 6.

<sup>5</sup>—<sup>5</sup> A reading based on 1 Chr. xi. 11, Luc., etc.

<sup>6</sup>—<sup>6</sup> Luc.

<sup>7</sup>—<sup>7</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 11. [The phrase probably means "slew."—Ed.]

<sup>8</sup>—<sup>8</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 13.

Israel fell back, he stood his ground and slashed away at the Philistines till his arm was weary, and his hand was glued to his sword; and Yahweh wrought a great victory that day. The rest of the people turned and followed him only to plunder.—After him came Shammah, the son of Elah<sup>1</sup> the Hararite: the Philistines were assembled °at Lehi°, and there there was a plot of ground full of lentils. When the people fled before the Philistines, he took his stand in the middle of the plot and defended it, and defeated the Philistines. Thus Yahweh wrought a great victory.—<sup>2</sup>These are the exploits of the Three heroes.

Of the <sup>3</sup>Thirty<sup>3</sup> Abishai, Joab's brother, the son of Zeruiah, was chief: he swung his spear over 300 slain men, and was the most famous of the <sup>3</sup>Thirty<sup>3</sup>. Above the °Thirty° he was honoured, and became their captain, but the level of the Three he did not reach. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, °a brave° man, with many exploits to his credit, came from Kabzeel; he slew the two <sup>4</sup>sons of<sup>4</sup> Ariel °of° Moab; and also went down into a cistern and killed a lion on a snowy day. He further slew a tall<sup>5</sup> Egyptian who was armed with a spear; going at him with a stick, he wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. Such were the deeds of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada: he was famous among the °Thirty° heroes. Above the Thirty he was honoured, but to the level of the Three he did not reach; and David put him at the head of his bodyguard.

To the Thirty belonged further: Asahel the brother of Joab; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem; Shammah from Harod; <sup>6</sup>Elikah from Harod<sup>6</sup>; Helez from °Beth°-Pelet; Ira the son of Ikkesh from Tekoa; Abiezer from Anathoth; Sibbechai<sup>7</sup> from Hushah; Zalmon from Ahoah; Mahrai from Netophah; °Heled° the son of Baanah from Netophah;

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<sup>1</sup> Luc.; MT "Aga."

<sup>2</sup> *Vv.* 13-17a are transferred to the end of the list.

3—3 So Syr. and MSS.

4—4 Inserted with LXX.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 23.

6—6 Omitted in LXX, Syr. and 1 Chron. xi. 27.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Chron. xi. 29.

Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin; Benaiah from Pirathon; Hiddai from the valleys of Gaash; Abibaal<sup>1</sup> from Beth-Arba; Azmaveth from Bahurim; Eljahba from Shaalbim; <sup>2</sup>Jashen the Gunite<sup>2</sup> Jonathan °the son of° Shammah from Harar; Ahiam the son of Sharar from Harar; Eliphelet the son of . . . (?) from Beth-Maachah; Eliam the son of Ahithophel from Gilo; Hezro from Carmel; Paarai from Arab; Jigeal<sup>3</sup> the son of Nathan from Zobah; Bani the Gadite; Zelek the Ammonite; Naharai from Beeroth, the armour-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah; Ira from °Jattir°; Gareb from °Jattir°; Uriah the Hittite;—in all thirty-seven.

Once when David was in the °fastness° of Adullam, and a company of Philistines were encamped in the plain of Rephaim, °three° of the Thirty went down ° ° and came to David <sup>4</sup>at the rock<sup>4</sup>. David was then in the fastness, and a Philistine garrison was at the same time in Bethlehem. David was seized with a longing which he uttered in the cry, “O for a draught from the well of Bethlehem by the city gate!” Hearing this the three heroes broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem, and brought it to David. But he refused to drink it; and pouring it out as a libation to Yahweh, he said, “God forbid that I should do such a thing! It is the blood of men who have gone at the risk of their lives—shall I drink that?”—and would not drink it.

#### (5) *The Last Words of David* (xxiii. 1-7).

These are David's last words :

Oracle of David, Jesse's son,  
 Oracle of one who was raised on high,—  
 The anointed of Jacob's God,  
 The idol of Israel's songs!

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<sup>1</sup> MT “Abi-Albon”; 1 Chr. xi. 32 reads “Abiel”; originally probably Abibaal.

<sup>2—2</sup> Emended from 1 Chr. xi. 34 and Luc.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chr. xi. 38 reads “Joel.”

<sup>4—4</sup> So 1 Chr. xi. 15 and Luc., MT might be restored so as to read “at the beginning of harvest.”



Yahweh's spirit speaks in me,  
His word is on my tongue.  
The God of Jacob<sup>1</sup> said to me,  
The Rock of Israel spoke :

“Who rules o'er men in righteousness—  
Who rules in godly fear—  
Is like morning light at sunrise—  
Like cloudless morn, that after rain  
<sup>2</sup>Brings verdure forth<sup>2</sup> from the earth.”

Yea, stands not so my house with God ?  
A lasting covenant he made with me,  
Ordered in all ways and sure.  
Yea, all my weal and all °my° joy,  
Shall he not make to flourish ?

But reprobates—like wind-driven thorns are they all !  
They are not to be grasped with the hand.  
Who touches them, with iron and spear-shaft armed  
must be :

The fire must wholly consume them ! ° °

(6) *A Psalm attributed to David* (xxii.=Ps. xviii.).

These are the words of David's song to Yahweh, on the day when Yahweh had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul :

°I love thee, O Yahweh, my strength°—  
Yahweh, my rock and my fastness, <sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup>  
My God, my Rock where I hide me,  
My shield, my horn of salvation !  
[My fortress °and refuge, my deliverer from violence°.]  
“All praise be to Yahweh !” I cry ;  
From my enemies I am delivered.

---

<sup>1</sup> So Old Latin Version ; MT “ Israel.”

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Emended text ; MT “ through brightness young grass (springs) ” (?).

<sup>3</sup>—<sup>3</sup> A phrase omitted.

°—° Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

For billows of death closed o'er me,  
Streams of perdition assailed me ;  
Cords of the underworld bound me,  
Death's snares encompassed my feet.

In my anguish I called upon Yahweh ;  
°Loud° to my God did I °cry° ;  
And he heard in his temple my voice,  
My loud cry °entered° his ears.

Then shook and trembled the earth,  
The pillars of heaven did quake,  
And reeled because of his wrath :  
Smoke went up from his nostrils,  
Devouring fire from his mouth ;  
Fire-coals burned fiercely before him.

And he bent the heavens and came down,  
With dark clouds under his feet.  
He rode on a cherub and flew,  
And °swooped down° on the wings of the wind ;  
Made darkness a °covert° around him,  
°Dark° waters, and <sup>1</sup>thickness<sup>1</sup> of clouds.  
From the brightness before him °broke forth°  
°Lightning and° fiery coals.

From heaven did Yahweh thunder,  
And the Highest uttered his voice ;  
Sent arrows and scattered <sup>2</sup>my foes<sup>2</sup>,  
Shot lightnings, and routed °them all.°

Then Ocean's bed was laid bare,  
Uncovered the pillars of earth :  
At °thy° rebuke, O Yahweh,  
At the blast of °thy° nostrils' breath.

---

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> Slight emendation.

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> M'T "them."

•—° Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

He sent from on high and took me,  
Drew me from waters many :  
Saved me from enemies fierce,  
From foes too strong for me.  
In my day of distress they assailed me ;  
But in Yahweh I found a stay :  
He brought me out into freedom—  
Loosed me, because of his love.

Yahweh requites me after my right,  
Rewards me after my innocence ;  
For Yahweh's ways I have kept,  
Nor wickedly strayed from my God ;  
Yea, all his laws were before me,  
His decrees I °put not aside°.  
Thus was I blameless before him,  
And kept myself free from sin ;  
So Yahweh has dealt with me after my right,  
And my innocence plain to his eyes.

With the good man thou shew'st thyself good,  
With the upright shew'st thyself upright ;  
With the pure thou shew'st thyself pure ;  
But against the perverted perverse.  
Yea, thou helpest afflicted souls,  
But humblest °the eyes of pride°.

For thou art my lamp, O Yahweh,  
°My God° who lightens my gloom ;  
Through thee I °break through a fence°,  
Through my God I leap over a wall.  
The God—whose way is unerring !  
Faultless is Yahweh's word !  
A shield is he to all  
Who flee for refuge to him.

---

<sup>1</sup>—<sup>1</sup> So many MSS ; MT “Yahweh.”

<sup>2</sup>—<sup>2</sup> MT “run on a troop.”

°—° Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

For who is a God save Yahweh,  
 And who a Rock but our God ?—  
 The God who °girds me with° might,  
 And straightens out °my° way,  
 Who lends me the feet of the hind,  
 And sets me on ° ° lofty heights,  
 Who trains my hands for war—  
 My arms to bend the bow<sup>1</sup> !

Thou gav'st me the shield of thy heip ;  
 Thy °condescension° makes me great.  
 Thou extendest the stride of my feet,  
 And my ankle-joints did not give way !  
 I pursue and °o'ertake° my foes ;  
 And turn not back till they're slain :  
 ° ° I smite them : they °cannot° arise,  
 They sink overpowered at my feet.

Yea, with strength for the fight thou dost gird me ;  
 Subduest before me my foes :  
 My enemies thou turnest to flight ;  
 My haters by thee are consumed.  
 They °cried°—there was none to deliver !  
 To Yahweh—he answered them not !  
 So I crushed them like dust of the highway<sup>2</sup>—  
 Ground them down like mire on the streets ° .°

Thou hast saved me in strife with the heathen,  
 Of nations thou °makest° me head ;  
 A people I know not shall serve me.  
 Strangers come cringing before me,—  
 At hearsay obey my command.  
 Yea, strangers <sup>3</sup>bring me their gifts<sup>3</sup>,  
 And °trembling come forth° from their holds.

---

<sup>1</sup> Luc. ; MT + “of brass.”

<sup>2</sup> Emendation ; MT “earth.”

<sup>3—3</sup> Emendation ; MT “fade away.”

°—° Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

Yahweh, the living One ! Blest be my Rock !  
Praised be the God ° ° of my help !  
The God who grants me revenge,  
And brings peoples under my sway ;  
Who °saves° me from °wrathful° foes,  
Exalts me above my rivals,  
From violent men sets me free.

Therefore I praise thee, Yahweh !  
'Mong the heathen I sing to thy name ;  
Who °so wondrously° helpeth his king,  
And crowns his anointed with favour :  
David and his seed for ever !

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°—° Additions, omissions and changes in accordance with the text of Ps. xviii.

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